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ABSTRACT

Even Start is a family-centered national literacy program whose goal is to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by expanding the educational opportunities available to low-income families with limited educational experiences. To reach this goal, all Even Start projects provide services in each of three core areas: adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education. As part of the second national evaluation of Even Start, this report focuses on data for the 1994-95 program year, relating results to previous program years where appropriate. The report addresses changes in the characteristics of participating families, the kinds and intensity of services provided and received, and the results of participation for parents and children. The 10 chapters discuss: (1) program background and organization of the report; (2) components of the previous and current national evaluations, including an overview of the findings from the previous evaluation and research questions guiding this evaluation; (3) characteristics of program participants; (4) descriptions of educational and support services Even Start projects offer to the participating families; (5) the extent of participation by Even Start families in the services offered; (6) characteristics of families most in need and the extent of their participation in the Even Start program; (7) educational and developmental outcomes of Even Start participants; (8) the potential influence of various project characteristics and service delivery practices on participants' educational progress; (9) how the program is implemented; and (10) a summary of key findings. This summary notes that the Even Start program has undergone a steady expansion in the size and the areas of service delivery and that there are preliminary indications that Even Start services are helping to improve parents' academic skills and children's language development. (Contains 29 references and appendices containing Even Start legislation and additional data tables.) (LPP)

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National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program

1995 Interim Report

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NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

1995 INTERIM REPORT

January 1997

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Acknowledgements

This report describes the Even Start Program as it completed the second year of the second national evaluation. For the first time in this evaluation, all Even Start projects reported data on all participating families using the current evaluation instrument, the Even Start Information System (ESIS). Meeting this requirement was a great challenge for all involved.

By far, the greatest thanks goes to the Even Start project directors, their staff, and, in many cases, local evaluators, who painstakingly gathered information about all new families, maintained participation records on all families, and entered all these data into the data collection instrument by the end of the reporting year. In addition, many state coordinators took active roles in assisting their projects in this endeavor. In all, 476 of 513 projects operating in 1994-95 submitted data by the final due date. All of their efforts are deeply appreciated.

A special recognition is due to the 57 projects that were selected to participate in the Sample Study. In addition to collecting data, which all other projects do, the Sample Study projects must administer assessment tests to new families at intake and at the end of their first and second years of participation. Despite their already heavy workload, most of the projects completed this additional requirement successfully.

This four-year evaluation is a complex undertaking, involving many different tasks, such as conducting training conferences, developing a training video tape, and revising the data collection forms and user's manual, in addition to data collection, analysis, and reporting. Throughout the performance of all these tasks, the U.S. Department of Education staff have provided valuable guidance and support to the evaluation contractors. In particular, special thanks are due to Robert Glenn and Barbara Vespucci, Planning and Evaluation Service's contracting officer's technical representatives, and Patricia McKee, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

This evaluation is conducted by two consulting firms: Fu Associates, Ltd., the prime contractor, and Abt Associates Inc., the subcontractor. The major contributors to the Fu Associates' team, headed by Fumiyo Tao, are: Christine Arriola, Sherry Khan, Kathleen McDonough, Annette Sieracki, Hope Tarr, and Marlene Walker. Their tireless effort, especially the contributions of Ms. Khan and Ms. McDonough in assisting local projects with data collection, allowed us to complete the 1994-95 evaluation successfully.

Key staff of the Abt Associates' team, headed by Janet Swartz, are: Dylan Conger, Beth Gamse, Marjorie Levin, Marc Moss, and Robert St.Pierre. In addition to participating in all components of the Universe Study, Abt staff played a leading role in the Sample Study and special studies of the Migrant Education Even Start and tribal Even Start projects.

Executive Summary

The Even Start Program provides educational services to parents and children as a family unit. The services are designed to improve the educational opportunities of low-income families and to help break the cycle of poverty. The program's family-oriented approach is exemplified by its interrelated goals: (1) to help parents improve their basic skills; (2) to help them become full partners in the education of their children; and (3) to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners. All Even Start projects are expected to provide services in each of three "core" areas: adult education; parenting education; and early childhood education. They do this through providing direct support for services and through working with other service providers.

The Even Start Family Literacy Program originally was authorized as Part B of Chapter 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297). In 1991 Congress passed the National Literacy Act (P.L. 102-73) which amended the Even Start program. In 1994 the program was reauthorized by the Improving America's Schools Act as Part B of Title I of the ESEA. This report refers to changes made to the program during that reauthorization. However, projects were not required to implement those changes until 1995-96.

Since its inception in 1989, the program has grown from the initial cohort of 76 projects serving approximately 2,500 families to 513 local projects serving approximately 31,000 families nationwide in 1994-95. The program operates now through competitive grants from the states.

The National Evaluation

Federal law mandates an annual evaluation of all Even Start projects. The first national evaluation documented the program's development from 1989 to 1993. The current national evaluation covers the subsequent four program years, from 1993 to 1997. This report focuses on presenting the data for the 1994-95 program year. Key findings from the 1995 data are related to results from previous program years where appropriate.

The current national Even Start evaluation is designed to address four major questions. These are:

- Who is served by the program and what services do they receive? Is the program reaching the appropriate target population?

- How is the federal funding spent on the program? How many of the projects are well implemented?

- How well does the Even Start basic model work? Do participants perform better on key measures than similar persons who do not participate?

- What are effective practices and programs?

The evaluation described here draws from two sources: the Universe Study, in which all projects annually submit data on program implementation and participants; and the Sample Study, which collects data on program outcomes from a sample of 57 projects.

For the Universe Study, 476 of the 513 projects operating in 1994-95 (93 percent) returned usable evaluation data by the final due date. Of the 57 projects in the Sample Study, 48 projects (84 percent) submitted usable outcome assessment data.

The 1995 data collection was designed to report on changes in the characteristics of participating families, the kinds and intensity of services provided and received, and the results of participation for parents and children.

Participant Recruitment

To be eligible for Even Start in 1994-95, a family generally had to: (a) have a parent who was eligible to receive services under the Adult Education Act, and (b) have a child less than eight years of age.

In addition, nearly one-half of Even Start projects employ supplemental criteria to target and recruit families. Among projects that employ additional criteria, 86 percent target families where the parent or parents have no high school diploma. Seventy-four percent target families with children between the ages of three and five years old.

The vast majority of projects are easily able to locate and enroll eligible families. In fact, most projects in both 1993-94 and 1994-95 relied on "word of mouth" strategies to contact potentially eligible families, followed by referrals from collaborating agencies.

Even Start Participants

Improving their educational status is the most frequently cited reason parents enroll in Even Start, followed by the desire to learn English and by the desire to improve their child's chances for academic success.

Even Start projects are expected to identify and recruit families most in need of Even Start services. A large portion of Even Start parents (44 percent) had reached only 9th grade or below before enrolling in Even Start. Another large group (41 percent) had reached 10-12th grades but had not completed high school. Approximately 11 percent of Even Start adults in 1994-95 had a high school diploma or GED prior to entering the program. This represents a substantial decrease from 1992-93 when 21 percent had high school diplomas or their equivalent at intake.

Nearly half (48 percent) of all the Even Start families in 1994-95 were two-parent families; another 39 percent were headed by single parents. Thirteen percent of the families lived in extended families. These percentages are very similar to previous years' data.

The typical Even Start family in 1994-95 comprised two parents between the ages of 20 and 39 years and three to four children. Families headed by single parents tended to have fewer children--either two or three. Teen parents headed 9 percent of families. The average age of a child enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 was 4.4 years. Twenty-nine percent of Even Start children in 1994-95 were between birth and age three, and 42 percent were three to five years old.

Poverty is characteristic of Even Start participants. In 1994-95, 80 percent of Even Start families had annual incomes below $15,000, and 40 percent of families had incomes below $6,000. These findings are comparable to those of 1992-93, in which 66 percent of Even Start families had total annual incomes below $10,000. Approximately 47 percent of Even Start families rely on government assistance as their primary source of income. The primary source of income for 46 percent of Even Start families is earned income. While only 27 percent of participating parents in 1994-95 were employed at the time of intake, the data suggest that non-participating spouses in many two-parent families were employed.

The ethnic composition of Even Start participants has shifted substantially since the program's inception. Hispanics, 17 percent of all Even Start parents in 1989-90, now represent the largest group to be served--36 percent in 1994-95. Currently, whites are the second largest group (34 percent), followed by African Americans (23 percent). Asians/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans have consistently represented less than 10 percent of the parent population.

The percentage of primarily Spanish-speaking parents has risen from 15 percent in 1989-90 to 29 percent in 1994-95. As of 1994-95, 37 percent of Even Start parents did not speak English at home.

The vast majority of Even Start projects continue to recruit and serve families in their communities that are most in need of the program services. Families with extreme needs were identified based on the following seven criteria:

(1) Families with annual incomes of less than $9,000 (57 percent of families);
(2) Families headed by single parents (39 percent);
(3) Parents with 8th-grade or lower educational experience (28 percent of parents);
(4) Families whose primary source of income is government assistance or alimony (49 percent);
(5) Families that currently receive government assistance (43 percent);
(6) Parents who speak languages other than English at home (37 percent); and
(7) Families with three or more children ages 15 or younger (57 percent).

Many Even Start families reported experiencing multiple difficulties--combinations of severe poverty, problems and challenges associated with being a single-parent family, having low employability due to limited educational experiences, limited English proficiency, and/or difficulties of raising several children given very limited incomes and occupational capabilities.

On average, Even Start parents reported about three of the seven extreme needs listed above. One-fourth of parents had four or more of the extreme need indicators.

Even Start Educational and Support Services

The types of educational and support services provided by Even Start projects have not changed greatly over the years. In 1994-95, over half of Even Start projects utilized or adapted aspects of existing curriculum models, such as the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Model (51 percent), the High Scope curriculum (48 percent), Parents as Teachers (40 percent), and Head Start (34 percent).

Intermediate- and secondary-level adult education programs tended to involve more functional literacy approaches than the beginning adult basic education or English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Life skills and parenting issues were incorporated in all levels of adult education. Vocational topics provided the context for secondary education programs more so than for beginning or intermediate-level programs.

Parenting education was largely child focused. Topics covered by a majority of projects were child development, the development of language and thinking, motor and social skills, and ways to ensure a child's safety and well-being. Almost all projects included parent-child literacy activities as part of their parenting education curriculum. Topics addressed through parent-child joint activities included: reading and storytelling; language development exercises; child's social development, independence, self-discipline, and self-help skills; health and nutrition; early academic skills; arts and crafts; sensory stimulation; and gross motor skills.

To facilitate families' participation in Even Start educational activities, projects provided a wide range of support services, either directly or through referrals. The support services most often received by Even Start parents and children were child care, transportation, family support, and meals.

Even Start Program Implementation

Many aspects of program implementation have remained largely unchanged over time. These include the number and composition of project staff, the credentials of instructors and aides, the implementation barriers that projects encounter, and the major areas where technical assistance is needed.

The "average" project in 1994-95 had a staff of ten Even Start-paid persons that included one project administrator, three to four teachers, two teachers' aides, one family specialist, one support service provider, one evaluator, and one administrative support person. Seventy-three percent of the Even Start-paid instructors had a bachelor's degree, and 23 percent had a master's degree. Ninety-six percent of aides had at least a high school diploma or GED, and 13 percent had a four-year degree. Over half of all Even Start instructors had six or more years of teaching experience. The average hours of inservice training that an Even Start staff member spent in 1993-94 and 1994-95 ranged from 40 to 72 hours, depending on job category.

The five issues identified as major problems by one-third to one-fifth of projects in 1994-95 remained unchanged from those reported by projects in 1992-93 and 1993-94. These issues included: participant attendance, participants' retention and motivation, sufficient financial resources, participants' social service needs, and transportation for participants. These barriers resurfaced as the major topics on which projects report the need for technical assistance.

In 1994-95, 90 percent of the projects in operation were funded for four years. The average federal Even Start allocation for 1994-95 was $173,586 per project, and the average local contribution was $87,161. The average total resources per project amounted to $263,975.[1] The average total resources increased by $25,601 from the comparable average for 1993-94.

The per family cost from federal funds for Even Start services tends to decrease as individual projects mature and gain efficiency of operation. In the first evaluation, the annual federal per family cost for the 123 projects that began in 1989-1991 declined from $5,900 in 1989-90 to $3,700 in 1990-91, and then to $2,500 in 1991-92, when these projects were second- and third-year projects. In 1994-95, the federal funds averaged $2,735 per family across all projects, including approximately 80 first-year projects. This figure remains essentially unchanged from the previous year.

Intensity of Services and Levels of Participation

In 1994-95, the projects offered educational services an average of 10 months during the year. On average projects provided between 311 and 367 hours per year of adult education depending on the educational level, 195 hours of parenting education, and between 350 hours and 557 hours per year of early childhood education depending on the age group. Compared to the previous year, the average hours offered increased across all levels of adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education. Regardless of age, children were scheduled to receive an average of about three hours per month of home-based instruction.

It is important to distinguish between services offered by projects and participants' rates of participation. In 1994-95, 85 percent of Even Start parents participated in adult education, for an annual average of 100 hours per parent. This level of participation has remained consistent since 1992-93. Adult secondary education (ASE) and GED preparation were the two most commonly attended adult education programs.

In 1994-95, 88 percent of parents participated in parenting education, receiving an annual average of 32 hours of instruction. Single parents spent significantly more time in parenting education than parents from two-parent or extended families. Older parents spent more time in parenting education than teen parents.

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[1] The sum of the average federal and local shares does not equal the average total per family cost due to slightly different numbers of projects included in each of the three averages.

Participation in early childhood education has remained stable and substantial (at least 90 percent) throughout the first six years of Even Start. In 1994-95, 96 percent of the children enrolled in Even Start participated in some form of early childhood education, and 52 percent participated for 7 to 12 months. Most early childhood education programs fell into two categories: structured, center-based programs or individualized, home-based programs.

Retention and Reasons for Leaving

Sixty-four percent of Even Start families in 1994-95 were retained at the end of the year. Among families who left the program, 13 percent (or about 5 percent of the total) had reached their planned educational goals. Thus, approximately 70 percent of families continued participation or had successfully completed the program. The single most common reason for exiting the program was families moving out of the service area (16 percent of terminations). Thirty-eight percent of termination was due to a combination of factors, including poor attendance, lack of interest, and family problems.

Educational and Developmental Outcomes of Even Start

The purpose of the Sample Study was to relate participation in Even Start services to specific, measurable educational and developmental outcomes for both adults and children. Similar to the first evaluation, the Sample Study measured three types of educational/developmental outcomes: child cognitive development; adult education; and parenting. However, in the second evaluation there was no control group, and program outcomes were assessed in terms of the differences between participants' pretest (i.e., pre-Even Start) and posttest scores on a battery of standardized tests.

In the domain of child cognitive development, children in both the first and current evaluation achieved significant gains on the PreSchool Inventory (PSI), a test for school readiness skills. In 1994-95, Even Start children gained one standard deviation in the approximately seven months between pretest and posttest assessments. Even Start children in 1994-95 also made significant gains on the Preschool Language Scale-3 (PLS-3), used to measure language development. The total number of early childhood education hours that children received was statistically significant and positively related to gains on both the PSI and the PLS-3.

Likewise, total hours of adult education instruction had a significant, positive relationship to adults' gains on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) and Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) math tests, but not to the reading tests. The gains on the CASAS are comparable to those seen in the first Even Start four-year evaluation and in other adult education programs. Approximately 8 percent of adults in the Universe Study and 24 percent of adults in the Sample Study attained a GED certificate while participating in Even Start.

The total hours of parenting education were related to gain scores on the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) Screening Questionnaire which measures the quality of cognitive stimulation and emotional support provided to the child by the family. Parent posttest scores on the HOME Screening Questionnaire (HSQ) showed moderate gains for both parents of children less than three years old and for parents of children between three and six years old.

While the second Even Start evaluation does not include a control group, a large control group of low-income families participating in a national evaluation of another federally funded "two-generation, family support" program showed no change in HSQ scores over time, suggesting that there is no "normal" or "developmental" growth associated with this measure. This further suggests that the changes seen among Even Start families are due to the program rather than to other factors.

Factors Associated with Program Outcomes

Some participant and program characteristics are associated with variations in educational/developmental outcomes. The amount of instruction received by Even Start participants was related positively to nearly all outcomes measured, although children from the neediest families benefitted less from Even Start than their peers from relatively less needy families.

Project size and staff characteristics (staff size, degree status, years of professional experience, and staff-to-family ratio) made no appreciable difference in participants' educational gains. However, children enrolled in projects that emphasized center-based instruction had larger learning gains than children enrolled in projects that provided mostly home-based services. This may be due to the fact that the latter typically involves fewer hours of instructional time. Families in projects that allocated greater time to joint parent-child learning activities had better home learning environments than families in projects that allocated less time to joint learning activities. This suggests that joint activities may have a greater impact on Even Start family home environments than parenting information presented to parents alone.

Conclusions

Throughout the first six years of program implementation, many aspects of Even Start such as the types of services offered, staffing, and implementation challenges have remained relatively constant. At the same time, some aspects of the program are showing signs of increasing effectiveness. For example, service intensity has increased over the last two years, as the rate of participation in all three core components and the retention rate both appear to be improving. In addition, federal funds spent per family are holding stable, even with the annual addition of nearly 80 new projects.

Similarly, the characteristics of Even Start participants reveal a mixture of consistency and change over the years. Most of the participating parents are young adults who have completed some high school education before enrolling in Even Start, and a majority of participating children are in the preschool-kindergarten age range. Most of the participating parents are unemployed at intake and have below poverty-level incomes.

One notable change in the 1994-95 data is a significant increase of Hispanic families compared to 1992-93 and earlier. This demographic change is likely to present new challenges for many projects. For example, projects will need to focus greater effort on providing quality ESL services. Projects may need to strengthen the beginning adult basic education programs, since most of the parents entering Even Start with the lowest levels of education are Hispanic and Asian.

Finally, there are some indications that Even Start services are helping to improve parents' academic skills and children's language development. The 1994-95 data from the Sample Study showed consistent positive gains on all adult and child test scores. The majority of these gains were moderate to large. Data from the 1995-96 evaluation will provide opportunities to further track the longevity of these results.

Contents

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ... i

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ... iii

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION ... 1

The Even Start Program ... 1
Organization of the Report ... 6

CHAPTER TWO EVEN START NATIONAL EVALUATION ... 9

Authorizing Legislation ... 9
The First Even Start National Evaluation ... 9
Components of the First Evaluation ... 9
Current National Evaluation ... 10
Research Questions Guiding the Current Evaluation ... 10
Components of the Current Evaluation ... 12
Scope of the 1993-94 Evaluation ... 16
Scope of the 1994-95 Evaluation ... 16

CHAPTER THREE WHO ARE THE EVEN START FAMILIES? ... 19

Overview of the 1994-95 Findings ... 20
How Many Families Are in Even Start? ... 21
What Are the Characteristics of Even Start Families? ... 21
Family Structure and Size ... 22
Age of Parents ... 26
Ethnic Background ... 28
Family Economic Characteristics ... 31
Sources of Family Income ... 33
Length of Residence in the U.S. ... 36
What Are Additional Characteristics of Even Start Parents? ... 38
ESL Parents' English Proficiency ... 38
Parents' Educational Background ... 40
Experience with Employment Training and Adult Education ... 41
Employment Status at Intake ... 43
Parents' Reasons for Participating in Even Star ... 44

What Are the Characteristics of Even Start Children? 44
    Age and Gender of Participating Children 45
    History of Participation in Non-Even Start Programs 46

CHAPTER FOUR **WHAT SERVICES DO EVEN START PROJECTS PROVIDE TO PARTICIPANTS? 49**

Where Are Even Start Projects Located? 50
What Non-Even Start Services Are Available in the Communities? 53
How Are Families Recruited and Screened? 54
    Criteria for Targeted Recruitment 54
    Recruitment Strategies 56
    Screening Procedures 58
What Are the Basic Designs of Educational Programs? 60
    Educational Models Used by Local Project 60
    Characteristics of Even Start Curricula 61
    Intensity of Educational Services 65
    Contents of Parenting Education 68
    Types of Parent-Child Joint Activities 70
    Flexibility in Program Scheduling 73
How Are the Core Educational Programs Integrated? 74
    Parenting Education and Adult Basic Education 74
    Parenting and Early Childhood Education 77
    Adult Education and Early Childhood Education 77
What Support Services Do Even Start Families Need? 77

CHAPTER FIVE **TO WHAT EXTENT DID EVEN START FAMILIES PARTICIPATE IN THE SERVICES OFFERED? 81**

How Many Home Visits Were Made to Families? 82
What Was the Extent of Participation in Adult Educat85n? 85
    Levels of Adult Education Services 85
    Hours of Participation in Adult Education 87
    Group Differences in Adult Education Participation Hours . . 87
What Was the Extent of Participation in Parenting Education? 90
    Sub-group Analysis of Participation in Parenting Education 90
What Was the Extent of Participation in Early Childhood Education? 92
What Percentage of Families Participated in All Three Core Components? 96
What Were the Characteristics of Families That Did Not Participate in All Three Core Components? 100
What Project Characteristics Are Related to Participation Outcomes? 102
What Support Services Did Parents and Children Receive? 105

Subgroup Analyses of Receipt of Support Services 106
How Many Children Had Special Needs? 108
What Were the Patterns of Retention? 110
Percentage of Families Retained at Year End 110
Reasons for Termination 111
Families That Continued Participation or Completed the Program 114
Characteristics of Families That Exited the Even Start Program Unsuccessfully 118

CHAPTER SIX **DO PROJECTS SERVE THE FAMILIES MOST IN NEED? 121**

What Are the Characteristics of Families Most in Need? 122
Where Do the Families Most in Need Live? What Are Their Other Characteristics? 123
What Percent of Projects Serve Extremely Needy Families? 125
To What Extent Did the Families Most in Need Participate in Even Start Services? 129
Extent of Participation in Core Components 130
Year-End Participation Outcomes 132

CHAPTER SEVEN **WHAT WERE THE EDUCATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES OF EVEN START PARTICIPANTS? 135**

What Were the Child Development Outcomes? 136
The PreSchool Inventory 136
Preschool Language Scale (PLS-3) 140
What Were the Parenting Education Outcomes? 146
HOME Screening Questionnaire 147
What Were the Adult Education Outcomes? 151
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System 151
Tests of Adult Basic Education 157
What Were the Outcomes on Other Progress Indicators? 162
Attainment of a GED Certificate 162
Employment Status 163
Other Progress Indicators 164
Findings from Two Evaluations: A Detailed Review 165
Child Cognitive Development 165
Adult Literacy Development 168

CHAPTER EIGHT **DO PROGRAM OUTCOMES VARY DEPENDING ON PARTICIPANT AND PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS? 173**

How Do Outcomes Vary by Participant Characteristics? 174
Hours Received per Month 174
Gains on Outcome Measures by Hours of Instruction Received 177

Gains on Outcome Measures by Family Need Index 182
How Did Outcomes Vary by Project Characteristics? 183
Staff Characteristics 183
Project Size 184
Service Characteristics 184

CHAPTER NINE HOW IS THE EVEN START PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED? 187

What Organizations Operate the Even Start Program? 188
What Funds Support the Even Start Services? 190
How Are the Even Start Services Staffed? 194
Professional Qualifications of Even Start Staff 196
What Inservice Training Do Even Start Staff Receive? 198
Program Coordination 198
Adult Education 200
Parenting Education 202
Early Childhood Education 203
Adapting Services to Family 203
Other Inservice Topics Presented to Even Start Staff 203
To What Extent Do Collaborating Agencies Provide the
Core Educational Components? 204
What Are Major Challenges in Implementing Even Start? 211
Improving Attendance 213
Improving Participants' Retention and Motivation 213
Obtaining Sufficient Financial Resources 214
Meeting Social Service Needs of Families 214
Transportation 214
What Are Projects' Technical Assistance Needs? 218
Program Operations 219
Educational Services 219
Support Services 219
Evaluation 221
Other Needs for Technical Assistance 221
What Are Projects' Evaluation Activities and Future Plans? 221

CHAPTER TEN SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 225

Summary of Key Findings 226
Who are the Even Start families? 226
What are the social, economic, and educational
circumstances of Even Start families? 226
How are the families recruited and screened? 227
What are the Even Start educational programs like? 228
What is the intensity of Even Start services offered? 228
To what extent did the families participate in the services
offered? 229

How many families participated in all three core components? 230
What support services did families receive? 231
What were the patterns of retention? What were the reasons for families leaving the Even Start program? 231
Do projects serve the families most in need? What are the characteristics of families most in need? 232
What were the participation outcomes of families most in need? 232
What were the educational and developmental outcomes of Even Start participants? 232
Do program outcomes vary depending on project and participant characteristics? 233
How is the Even Start program implemented at the project level? What are their funding and staffing patterns? 234
What inservice training is provided to Even Start staff? 235
How are the service delivery activities shared by collaborating agencies? 235
What are the special barriers to implementation? What types of technical assistance do the projects need? . . 235
What are the projects' plans after the current Even Start grant expires? 236
Conclusions 236

REFERENCES **239**

APPENDIX A **EVEN START LEGISLATION**

APPENDIX B **ADDITIONAL DATA TABLES**

List of Exhibits

Exhibit 1.1. Even Start Conceptual Model 4
Exhibit 2.1. Components of the Even Start Evaluation 13
Exhibit 2.2. Number of Projects That Submitted 1994-95 Even Start National Evaluation Data 17
Exhibit 2.3. Number of Parents and Children in the Sample Study at Pretest and Posttest (1994-95) 18
Exhibit 3.1. Percent of Families, by Family Structure (1994-95) 22
Exhibit 3.2. Average Size of Families, by Family Structure (1994-95) 23
Exhibit 3.3. Number of Adults (Age 16 or Older) in the Family (1994-95) 24
Exhibit 3.4. Percent of Families, by Number and Age of Children (1994-95) 25
Exhibit 3.5. Percent of Parents, by Age in December 1994 (1994-95) 26
Exhibit 3.6. Average Family Size, by Age of Parent (1994-95) 27
Exhibit 3.7. Gender of Adults Participating in Even Start (1994-95) 28
Exhibit 3.8. Ethnic Backgrounds of Even Start Parents (1994-95) 29
Exhibit 3.9. Ethnic Backgrounds of Even Start Parents, by Region (1994-95) 30
Exhibit 3.10. Percent of Families, by Family Structure and Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95) 31
Exhibit 3.11. Percent of Families, by Family Annual Income (1994-95) 32
Exhibit 3.12. Percent of Families, by Annual Income and Ethnicity (1994-95) 33
Exhibit 3.13. Percent of Families, by Primary Source of Income (1994-95) 34
Exhibit 3.14. Percent of Parents Receiving Government Assistance at the Time of Intake, by Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95) 35
Exhibit 3.15. Percent of Parents Receiving Government Assistance at the Time of Intake, by Parents' Age (1994-95) 36
Exhibit 3.16. Percent of Families, by Ethnicity and Length of Residence in the United States (1994-95) 37
Exhibit 3.17. Percent of Families, by Region and Length of Residence in the United States (1994-95) 37
Exhibit 3.18. Percent of Families Using English or Other Languages at Home (1994-95) 38
Exhibit 3.19. Percent of Families, by Language Spoken at Home and Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95) 39
Exhibit 3.20. Percent of ESL Parents, by Levels of English Proficiency (1994-95) 39
Exhibit 3.21. Percent of Parents, by Educational Background at Intake (1994-95) 40
Exhibit 3.22. Average Levels of Education at Intake, by Parent Age and Ethnicity (1994-95) 41
Exhibit 3.23. Percent of Even Start Parents, by Job Training History (Before and at Time of Enrolling in Even Start, 1994-95) 42

Exhibit 3.24. Percent of Parents with Previous Adult Education Experiences (1994-95) 42
Exhibit 3.25. Employment Plans of Even Start Parents Who Were Not Employed at Intake (1994-95) 43
Exhibit 3.26. Percent of Parents, by Reason for Participating in Even Start (1994-95) 44
Exhibit 3.27. Percent of Participating Children, by Age (1994-95) 45
Exhibit 3.28. Gender of Participating Children (1994-95) 46
Exhibit 3.29. Percent of Children Participating in Non-Even Start Educational Programs Before and at Time of Enrolling in Even Start (1994-95) 47
Exhibit 4.1. Distribution of Projects, by Region (1994-95) 51
Exhibit 4.2. Distribution of Projects, by Community (Urban, Mixed, and Rural, 1994-95) 51
Exhibit 4.3. Distribution of Even Start Families, by Region and Type of Community (Number and Percent, 1994-95) 52
Exhibit 4.4. Percent of Projects Reporting Availability of Non-Even Start Educational Services in Their Communities (1994-95) 53
Exhibit 4.5. Criteria for Targeting Services to a Segment of the Eligible Population (1994-95) 55
Exhibit 4.6. Percent of Project Sites Using Special Recruitment Strategies (1994-95) . 57
Exhibit 4.7. Percent of Project Sites Using Special Recruitment Strategies "a Great Deal" (1994-95) 58
Exhibit 4.8. Percent of Project Sites, by Formal Steps Used "a Great Deal" in Screening Potential Participants (1994-95) 59
Exhibit 4.9. Percent of Project Sites, by "Very Influential" Sources for the Project Design (1994-95) 61
Exhibit 4.10. Main Source of Even Start Educational Curricula (1994-95) 62
Exhibit 4.11. Nature of Even Start Instruction: Individualized versus Standardized (1994-95) 62
Exhibit 4.12. Nature of Even Start Instruction: Group-Focused versus Individual-Focused (1994-95) 63
Exhibit 4.13. Nature of Even Start Instruction: Learner- versus Instructor-Selected Activities (1994-95) 64
Exhibit 4.14. Characteristics of Adult Basic Education Services (1994-95) 65
Exhibit 4.15. Intensity of Services Offered in Three Core Components (Average Across Reporting Project Sites, 1994-95) 67
Exhibit 4.16. Extent of Parenting Education Activities Offered (Percentages of Project Sites, 1994-95) 69
Exhibit 4.17. Percent of Project Sites Providing Various Types of Parenting Education Activities to "Most Families" (1994-95) 70
Exhibit 4.18. Hours Per Month a "Typical Family" Spends in Parent-Child Joint Activities, by Setting (1994-95) 71
Exhibit 4.19. Extent of Parent-Child Joint Activities Offered 72
Exhibit 4.20. Percent of Project Sites Offering Various Parent-Child Activities to "Most Families" (1994-95) 73

Exhibit 4.21. Flexibility in Scheduling of Even Start Services to Accommodate Adult Participants (1994-95) 74
Exhibit 4.22. Level of Integration of Even Start Core Services (1994-95) 75
Exhibit 4.23. Percent of Project Sites, by Nature of Integration of Even Start Core Services "Always/Usually" (1994-95) 76
Exhibit 4.24. Hours Per Month that Adult Education Is Combined with Parenting Education (1994-95) 77
Exhibit 4.25. Percent of Project Sites, by Families' Need for Support Services (1994-95) 78
Exhibit 4.26. Percent of Project Sites, by Families' Need for Support Services (All and Many Families) (1994-95) 79
Exhibit 5.1. Average Number of Home Visits, by Parents' Age (1994-95) 83
Exhibit 5.2. Percent of Other Adults in Family Participating in Parenting Education (1994-95) 84
Exhibit 5.3. Percent of Parents Participating in Adult Education Programs (1994-95) . 85
Exhibit 5.4. Percent of Parents Participating in Adult Education Programs, by Pre-Even Start Education Level and ESL Status (1994-95) 86
Exhibit 5.5. Annual Hours of Adult Education Participation, by Family Structure (1994-95) 88
Exhibit 5.6. Annual Hours of Participation in Adult Education, by Parents' Educational Background and Age (1994-95) 89
Exhibit 5.7. Annual Hours of Participation in Adult Education, by Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95) 90
Exhibit 5.8. Annual Hours of Participation in Parenting Education, by Parents' Age (1994-95) 91
Exhibit 5.9. Annual Hours of Participation in Parenting Education, by Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95) 92
Exhibit 5.10. Percent of Children Participating in Early Childhood Education Programs (1994-95) 93
Exhibit 5.11. Percent of Participating Children, by Months of Participation (1994-95) 94
Exhibit 5.12. Percent of Children Who Attended ECE for 10-12 Months, by Age of Child (1994-95) 95
Exhibit 5.13. Percent of Children Attending Early Childhood Education Services, by Length of Participation and Ethnicity (1994-95) 95
Exhibit 5.14. Percent of Participating Children, by Frequency of Absences (1994-95) . . 96
Exhibit 5.15. Extent of Participation in All Three Core Components (1994-95) 97
Exhibit 5.16. Percent of Families Participating in All Three Core Components, by Family Structure (1994-95) 97
Exhibit 5.17. Percent of Families Participating in All Three Core Components, by Parents' Age (1994-95) 98
Exhibit 5.18. Percent of Families Participating in All Three Core Components, by Parents' Educational Background (1994-95) 99
Exhibit 5.19. Percent of Families Participating in All Three Core Components, by Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95) 100
Exhibit 5.20. Percent of Parents Participating in Adult Education but Not All Core Components, by Age of Parents (1994-95) 101

Exhibit 5.21. Percent of Parents Participating in Adult Education but Not All Three Core Components, by Parents' Educational Background (At Time of Enrollment in Even Start) (1994-95) 102
Exhibit 5.22. Annual Hours of Participation in Adult Education by Adult Education Scheduled Contact Hours Offered, by Projects (1994-95) 104
Exhibit 5.23. Annual Hours of Participation in Parenting Education by Parenting Education Scheduled Contact Hours Offered by Projects (1994-95) 104
Exhibit 5.24. Number and Percent of Parents and Children Receiving Support Services (1994-95) 106
Exhibit 5.25. Average Number of Support Services Parents Received, by Family Structure (1994-95) 107
Exhibit 5.26. Average Number of Support Services Children Received, by Age of Child (1994-95) 108
Exhibit 5.27. Percent of Children with Special Needs (1994-95) 109
Exhibit 5.28. Number and Percent of Children with Special Needs, by Type of Needs (1994-95) 109
Exhibit 5.29. Percent of Families Continuing Participation at Year End (1994-95) 110
Exhibit 5.30. Reasons for Terminating Participation (Number and Percent of Families That Terminated, 1994-95) 111
Exhibit 5.31. Reasons for Terminating Participation, by Percent of Families That Terminated (1994-95) 112
Exhibit 5.32. "Other" Reasons for Families Discontinuing Participation in Even Start (1994-95) 113
Exhibit 5.33. Percent of Families Retained or Completed, by Family Structure (1994-95) 115
Exhibit 5.34. Percent of Families Retained or Completed, by Parents' EducationalLevel (1994-95) 116
Exhibit 5.35. Percent of Families Retained or Completed, by Parents' Age (1994-95) 117
Exhibit 5.36. Percent of Families Retained or Completed, by Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95) 117
Exhibit 5.37. Percent of Families Retained or Completed, by Parents' Ethnicity and ESL Status (1994-95) 118
Exhibit 5.38. Percent of Families Exiting for Negative Reasons, by Parents' Educational Background (1994-95) 119
Exhibit 5.39. Percent of Families Exiting for Negative Reasons, by Parents' Age (1994-95) 120
Exhibit 6.1. Average Extreme Need Index, by Region and Type of Community (Number of Parents in Analysis, 1994-95) 123
Exhibit 6.2. Average Extreme Need Index, by Ethnic Groups (1994-95) 124
Exhibit 6.3. Average Extreme Need Index, by Parents' Age (1994-95) 125
Exhibit 6.4. Percent of Extremely Needy Families in Projects (1994-95) 126
Exhibit 6.5. Adult Basic Education Hours Offered Annually by Project Sites, by Percent of Extremely Needy Families They Served (1994-95) 127
Exhibit 6.6. Hours of Parent-Child Joint Activities Offered Annually by Project Sites, by Percent of Extremely Needy Families They Served (1994-95) 128

Exhibit 6.7. Hours of Early Childhood Education (Ages 3-4) Offered Annually by Project Sites, by Percent of Extremely Needy Families They Served (1994-95) 128
Exhibit 6.8. Annual Hours of Participation in Adult and Parenting Education, by Family Need Index (1994-95) 130
Exhibit 6.9. Average Measure of Children's Absences, by Family Need Index (1994-95) 131
Exhibit 6.10. Percent of Families Participating in All Three Core Components, by Family Need Index (1994-95) 132
Exhibit 6.11. Percent of Families Continuing or Successfully Completed Their Goals at the End of Project Year, by Family Need Index (1994-95) 133
Exhibit 6.12. Percent of Families with Unsuccessful Termination, by Family Need Index (1994-95) 134
Exhibit 7.1. PSI Pretest Scores (Raw Score from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 138
Exhibit7.2 Pretest and Posttest Scores on PSI (Raw Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 140
Exhibit 7.3. PLS-3 Pretest Scores (Total Language Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 142
Exhibit 7.4. Pretest and Posttest Scores on PLS-3 (Standard Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 143
Exhibit 7.5. Gain Per Month on the PLS-3 (Standard Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 144
Exhibit 7.6. Age-Equivalent Scores on PLS-3 at Pretest and Posttest (Raw Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 145
Exhibit 7.7. HOME Screening Questionnaire Pretest Scores for Parents of Children Less than Three Years of Age (Raw Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 148
Exhibit 7.8. Home Screening Questionnaire Pretest Scores for Parents of Children Three to Six Years Old (Raw Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 149
Exhibit 7.9. Pretest and Posttest Scores on the HSQ (Raw Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 150
Exhibit 7.10. CASAS Reading Pretest Scores (Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 153
Exhibit 7.11. CASAS Math Pretest Scores (Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 154
Exhibit 7.12. Pretest and Posttest Scores on the CASAS (Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 155
Exhibit 7.13. Pretest and Posttest Literacy Levels on CASAS Reading (Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 155
Exhibit 7.14. Pretest and Posttest Literacy Levels on CASAS Math (Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 156
Exhibit 7.15. TABE Reading Pretest Scores (Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 159
Exhibit 7.16. TABE Math Pretest Scores (Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 160

Exhibit 7.17. Pretest and Posttest Scores on the TABE (Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95) 161
Exhibit 7.18. Grade Equivalent Scores Corresponding to TABE Reading and Math Quartiles at Pretest and Posttest (1994-95) 161
Exhibit 7.19. Progress Toward GED Certificate Among Adults Without High School Diploma or GED (Universe Study and Sample Study, 1994-95) 163
Exhibit 7.20. Employment Status at Beginning and End of 1994-95 Even Start Year(Universe Study and Sample Study) 164
Exhibit 7.21. Other Progress Indicators for Even Start Adults (Universe Study and Sample Study, 1994-95) 165
Exhibit 7.22. PSI Growth for Different Even Start Evaluation Samples, Compared With Developmental Growth 166
Exhibit 7.23. PPVT Growth for Different Even Start Evaluation Samples 167
Exhibit 7.24 PLS-3 Growth for the ESIS Evaluation Sample 168
Exhibit 7.25. CASAS Reading Growth for Different Even Start Evaluation Samples . . 169
Exhibit 7.26. CASAS Math Growth for the ESIS Evaluation Sample 170
Exhibit 7.27. TABE Reading and Math Growth for the ESIS Evaluation Samples 171
Exhibit 7.28. Rate of GED Attainment for Different Even Start Evaluation Samples . . . 172
Exhibit 8.1. Amount of Core Services Received (Sample Study, 1994-95) 175
Exhibit 8.2. Amount of Core Services Received for Subgroups With and Without Posttest Data (Sample Study, 1994-95) 177
Exhibit 8.3. Standardized Gain on PSI, by Total Hours of Early Childhood Education (1994-95) 178
Exhibit 8.4. Standardized Gain on PLS-3 Total Language Score, by Total Hours of Early Childhood Education (1994-95) 178
Exhibit 8.5. Standardized Gain on HOME Screening Questionnaire, by Total Hours of Parenting Education (1994-95) 179
Exhibit 8.6. Standardized Gain on CASAS Math, by Total Hours of Adult Education (1994-95) 179
Exhibit 8.7. Standardized Gain on TABE Math, by Total Hours of Adult Education (1994-95) 180
Exhibit 8.8. Relationship Between Need Index and Child/Parent Outcomes (1994-95) 183
Exhibit 9.1. Type of Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) Co-sponsoring Even Start Projects (1994-95) 189
Exhibit 9.2. Community-Based Organizations Co-sponsoring Even Start Projects (1994-95) 190
Exhibit 9.3. Length of Even Start Grant (1994-95) 191
Exhibit 9.4. Levels of Funding for Even Start Projects (1994-95) 192
Exhibit 9.5. Funding Resources Per Family (1994-95) 193
Exhibit 9.6. Even Start Program Funds per Family per Year 194
Exhibit 9.7. Number of Even Start Paid Staff and Their Assignments (1994-95) 195
Exhibit 9.8. Number of Even Start Paid Instructors and Volunteers, by Instructional Area (1994-95) 196
Exhibit 9.9. Academic Degrees and Years of Experience of Even Start Instructors and Aides 197

Exhibit 9.10. Average Days of Inservice Training During Program Year per Staff, by Staff Category (1994-95) 198
Exhibit 9.11. Percent of Projects Providing Inservice Training in Topics Related to Program Coordination (1994-95) 199
Exhibit 9.12. Percent of Projects Providing Inservice Training for Most of Their Staff in Topics Related to Program Coordination (1994-95) 200
Exhibit 9.13. Percent of Projects Reporting Inservice Training in Topics Related to Educational Services (1994-95) 201
Exhibit 9.14. Percent of Projects Reporting Inservice Training for Most of Their Staff in Topics Related to Educational Services (1994-95) 202
Exhibit 9.15. Percent of Project Sites Using Even Start and Collaborating Agency Staff to Provide Core Educational Components (1994-95) 205
Exhibit 9.16. Percent of Project Sites Using Even Start and Collaborating Agency Staff to Provide Core Educational Components (1994-95) 206
Exhibit 9.17. Percent of Project Sites That Have Collaborating Agencies as the Primary or Secondary Provider of Adult Education Services (1994-95) 207
Exhibit 9.18. Percent of Project Sites That Have Collaborating Agencies as the Primary or Secondary Provider of Parenting Education Services (1994-95) 208
Exhibit 9.19. Percent of Project Sites That Have Collaborating Agencies as the Primary or Secondary Providers of Early Childhood Education Services (1994-95) 209
Exhibit 9.20. Number of Instructors by Salary Source and Student Contact (1994-95) . 210
Exhibit 9.21. Degree of Satisfaction with Collaborative Arrangements (1994-95) 211
Exhibit 9.22. Percent of Projects Reporting Barriers to Program Implementation (1994-95) 212
Exhibit 9.23. Percent of Projects Reporting Barriers to Program Implementation (1994-95) 213
Exhibit 9.24. Solutions to Implementation Barriers (1994-95) 215
Exhibit 9.25. Areas in Need of Technical Assistance (1994-95) 220
Exhibit 9.26. Projects Conducting a Local Evaluation (1994-95) 222
Exhibit 9.27. Percent of Projects Planning to Make Changes in Their Programs Next Year Based on Findings From Local Evaluation (1994-95) 223
Exhibit 9.28. Plans for Continuation after Current Multi-year Grant Expires 224
Exhibit B.1. Number of Projects that Submitted 1994-95 Even Start National Evaluation Data, by State and Type of Project B1
Exhibit B.2. Number and Percent of Even Start Families, by Region, State, and Ethnicity B3
Exhibit B.3. Number of Even Start Projects, by Region, State, and Type of Community B6

Chapter One

Introduction

The Even Start Family Literacy Program is a national literacy program that addresses the basic educational needs of the family as a unit. The program builds upon three interrelated approaches. One approach is to provide opportunities for parents to participate in adult education and literacy programs. The second is to provide early childhood education for the children of these parents, and the third is to assist parents to take an active and effective role in promoting their children's development.

Since its inception in 1989, the program has achieved important milestones. The number of projects has expanded significantly, from the initial cohort of 76 projects in 1989 to over 500 projects in 1995. The responsibility for program administration has been transferred to the states, and some of the older projects have received recognition for their effective, well-implemented programs.

To monitor the development of this program, the law that authorizes the Even Start Program also mandates an annual evaluation of all Even Start projects. The first national evaluation documented the program's development during the years 1989 to 1993 and provided the early, short-term assessment of the program's effectiveness (St.Pierre et al., 1995).

The current national evaluation covers four program years from 1993 to 1997. This evaluation continues the activities of collecting data from all Even Start projects and preparing annual interim reports and the final report. Information presented in these reports provides performance feedback useful to local projects, state and federal administrators, legislators, and policymakers for program improvement and policy development. This information will also add to the knowledge base on the effects of family literacy programs by investigating the relationships between program processes and outcomes.

This chapter presents an overview of the Even Start Program, the conceptual model of the program, and the organization of this report.

The Even Start Program

The Even Start Program was initiated by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) as amended by the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988, Part B of Chapter 1 of Title I (P.L. 100-297). The Even Start legislation was amended in July 1991, when Congress passed the National Literacy Act (P.L. 102-73). In 1994, the Even Start program was reauthorized by the Improving America's Schools Act as Part

B of Title I of the ESEA.[2] According to the 1994 legislation, the Even Start program is intended to:

> "...help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the Nation's low-income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program ....The program shall (1) be implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services, (2) promote achievement of the National Education Goals, and (3) assist children and adults from low-income families to achieve the challenging state content standards and challenging state student performance standards." (P.L. 103-382, Sec. 1201)

The Even Start program represents an innovative combination of programs for adult literacy or basic education, parent education, and early childhood education. This federal initiative offers promise of addressing the literacy crisis in the nation through an integrative approach to adult and early childhood education. Focusing on parents and children as a unit, the Even Start program has three interrelated goals:

- to help parents improve their literacy or basic skills;
- to help parents become full partners in the education of their children; and
- to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners.

To be eligible for Even Start in 1994-95, a family had to have (a) a parent who was eligible for adult education programs under the Adult Education Act, and (b) a child less than eight years of age. Beginning in 1995-96, teen parents also are eligible who are within the state's compulsory school age range. This change makes the following additional teen parents eligible: teen parents under age 16, and teen parents over 16 but within the state's compulsory school attendance age range who are attending school.

Exhibit 1.1 presents a conceptual model that describes the types of activities conducted by Even Start projects; input factors that are believed to influence the design and delivery of services; and the intended outcomes for participating parents and children. At each level (inputs, processes, and outcomes), a set of contextual variables acts as mediators. Examples of measurable indicators are provided for each major set of variables shown in the model.

The model shows that local projects may differ across many dimensions. These include:

- The collaboration strategy used by projects to coordinate service delivery among several agencies;
- The characteristics of target children and adults (e.g., age of child, family language);

---

[2] This report draws upon the reauthorization law. However, projects were not required to implement changes made by that law until Program Year 1995-96.

- The extent to which services for families are integrated (e.g., activities in parent education reinforcing learning in adult education);

- The use of an existing educational model and materials for delivering early childhood and adult basic education services;

- Strategies for recruiting and retaining program participants;

- The role that parents play in the project; and

- Staff development activities.

The Even Start services to be provided to children and their parents can be grouped into two areas: (1) core educational services; and (2) support services. The "core" services consist of three components, as outlined in the reauthorized Even Start legislation:

- **Adult education:** high-quality instructional programs for adults to promote adult literacy [including adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), English-as-a-second language (ESL), and preparation for the General Education Development (GED) certificate];

- **Parent education:** high-quality instructional programs to empower parents to support the educational growth of their children; and

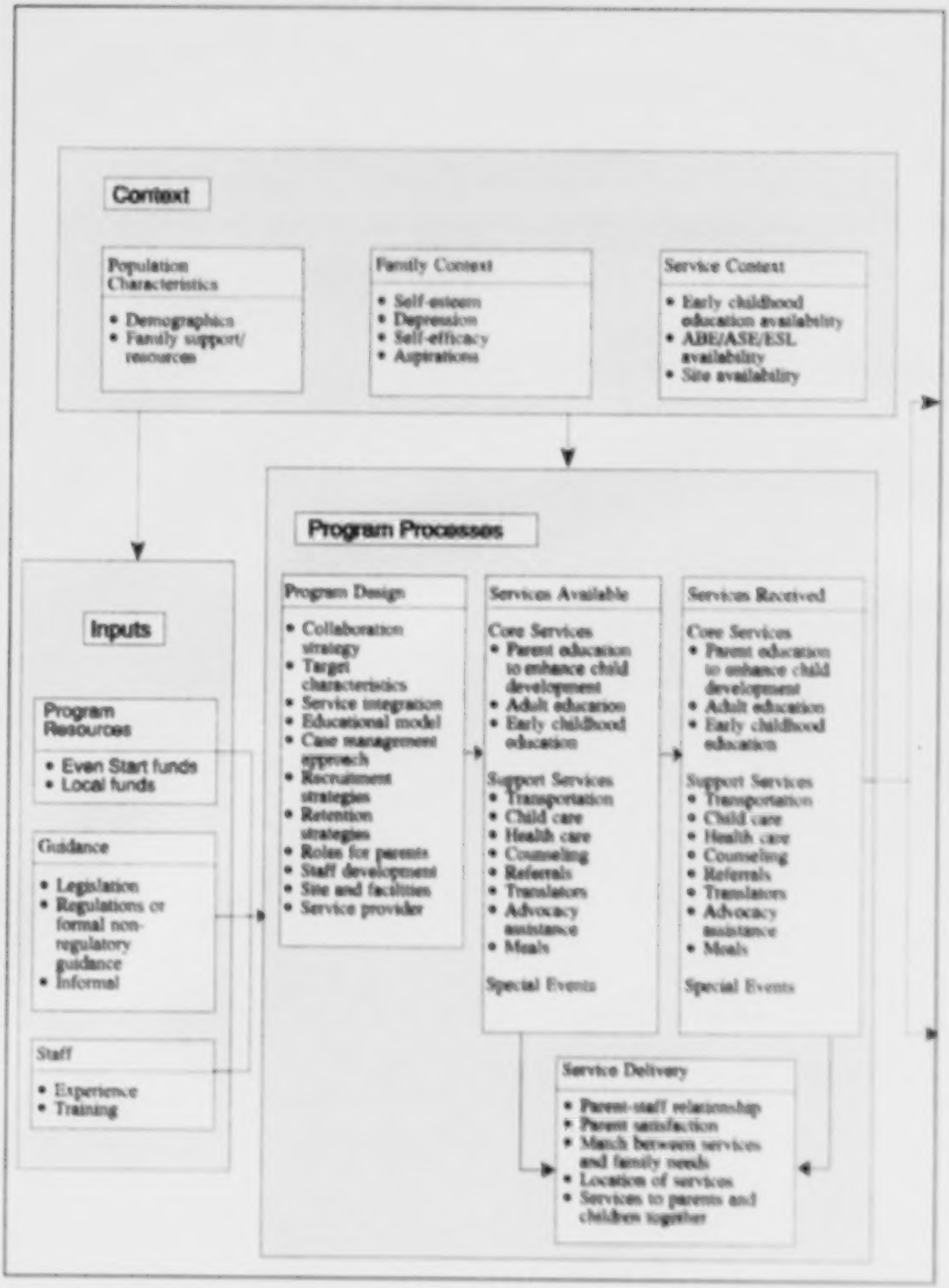
- **Early childhood education:** developmentally appropriate educational services for children, and programs designed to prepare children for success in regular school programs.

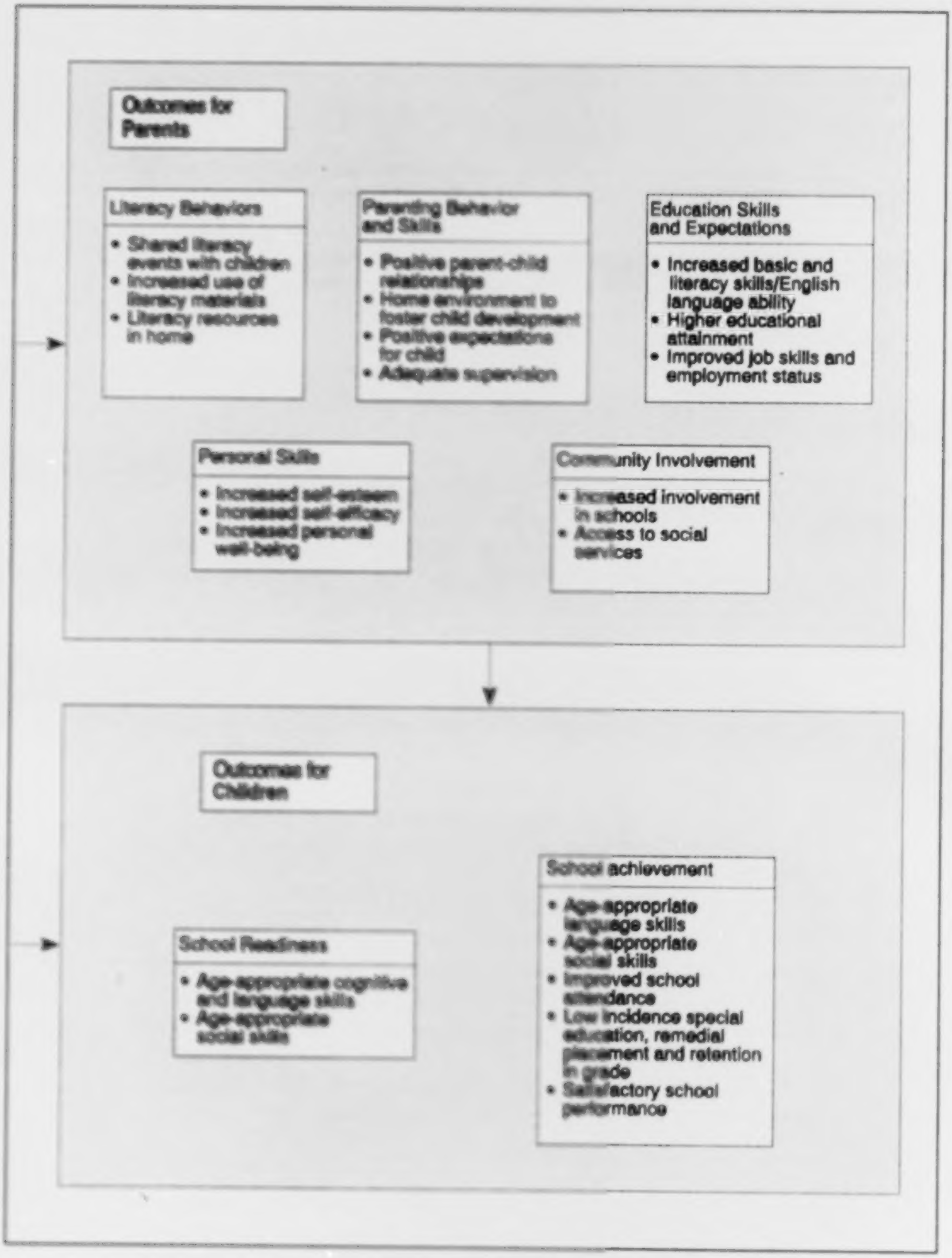
Even Start projects are required to provide core services to parents and children jointly and to provide home-based services. In addition to core services, Even Start projects typically provide a range of "support" services, some of which are designed to facilitate the provision of core services. Examples of support services are transportation, child care, health care, meals, nutrition assistance, mental health referral, referrals for employment, advocacy assistance with governmental agencies, counseling, child protective services, referrals for screening or treatment for chemical dependency, referrals for services to battered women, special care for a disabled family member, and translators. The Even Start legislation requires that support services be obtained from existing providers whenever possible, to ensure that Even Start projects avoid duplication of services.

Finally, Even Start projects often provide "special events" for participants. These may be one-time events such as a potluck supper, or they may include occasional activities or demonstrations on subjects of interest to the participating families.

Even Start is "family focused" rather than parent or child focused. Even Start projects must provide participating families with an integrated program of early childhood education, adult literacy or basic skills training, and parenting education.

Exhibit 1.1. Even Start Conceptual Model


Context
Population Characteristics
• Demographics
• Family support/ resources
Family Context
• Self-esteem
• Depression
• Self-efficacy
• Aspirations
Service Context
• Early childhood education availability
• ABE/ASE/ESL availability
• Site availability
Inputs
Program Resources
• Even Start funds
• Local funds
Guidance
• Legislation
• Regulations or formal non-regulatory guidance
• Informal
Staff
• Experience
• Training
Program Processes
Program Design
• Collaboration strategy
• Target characteristics
• Service integration
• Educational model
• Case management approach
• Recruitment strategies
• Retention strategies
• Roles for parents
• Staff development
• Site and facilities
• Service provider
Services Available
Core Services
• Parent education to enhance child development
• Adult education
• Early childhood education
Support Services
• Transportation
• Child care
• Health care
• Counseling
• Referrals
• Translators
• Advocacy assistance
• Meals
Special Events
Services Received
Core Services
• Parent education to enhance child development
• Adult education
• Early childhood education
Support Services
• Transportation
• Child care
• Health care
• Counseling
• Referrals
• Translators
• Advocacy assistance
• Meals
Special Events
Service Delivery
• Parent-staff relationship
• Parent satisfaction
• Match between services and family needs
• Location of services
• Services to parents and children together


Outcomes for Parents
Literacy Behaviors
• Shared literacy events with children
• Increased use of literacy materials
• Literacy resources in home
Parenting Behavior and Skills
• Positive parent-child relationships
• Home environment to foster child development
• Positive expectations for child
• Adequate supervision
Education Skills and Expectations
• Increased basic and literacy skills/English language ability
• Higher educational attainment
• Improved job skills and employment status
Personal Skills
• Increased self-esteem
• Increased self-efficacy
• Increased personal well-being
Community Involvement
• Increased involvement in schools
• Access to social services
Outcomes for Children
School Readiness
• Age-appropriate cognitive and language skills
• Age-appropriate social skills
School achievement
• Age-appropriate language skills
• Age-appropriate social skills
• Improved school attendance
• Low incidence special education, remedial placement and retention in grade
• Satisfactory school performance

Even Start began as a demonstration program administered by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) that provided school districts with four-year discretionary grants for family literacy projects. The first demonstration grants, totaling $14.5 million, were awarded to 76 projects in fiscal year 1989.

The Even Start program further expanded in fiscal year 1991, with funding reaching the level of $49.7 million. The year 1992 marked an important milestone in the history of Even Start. In that year, over 100 new projects were initiated, and the federal Even Start budget rose to $70,000,000. According to the Even Start statute, when program funding reached $50 million, it was to be administered at the state level. Thus, in 1992, the program administration, for the most part, was assumed by the states. In 1993 and 1994, states awarded approximately 80 new grants each year, raising the total count to nearly 450 in 1993 and over 500 in 1994. During the remaining period of this evaluation, the number of projects is expected to stabilize at approximately 550 each year.

Most Even Start projects are state administered. Each state receives funding based on the relative proportion of funds it receives under the Title I allocation formula. States hold grant competitions and make subgrant awards. The statute specifies that each Even Start subgrantee must receive a minimum of $75,000 per year, except for one subgrantee per state that may receive less than $75,000 under the reauthorized law.

The special set-aside programs for migrant families, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, and insular areas remain under the federal administration. In addition, the discretionary grants for statewide family literacy initiatives and a family literacy project in a prison that houses women and children are now authorized. These projects are funded and administered directly by the U.S. Department of Education.

Organization of the Report

This is the second Interim Report under the second Even Start national evaluation. Following *Chapter One: Introduction, Chapter Two: Even Start National Evaluation* describes the components of the previous and current national evaluations, followed by more detailed information on the scope and the research questions being addressed in the current evaluation. Chapter Two concludes with an overview of key findings from the previous evaluation years through 1994-95.

Program year 1994-95 was the first year under this evaluation in which information on participating families was collected. *Chapter Three: Who Are the Even Start Families?* presents detailed descriptions of the families, parents, and children who enrolled in Even Start during the 1994-95 program year. Following this introduction to the participating families, in *Chapter Four: What Services Do Even Start Projects Provide to Participants?*, we turn to extensive descriptions of educational and support services Even Start projects offer to the families.

It is important to distinguish the services projects offer and the extent to which the families participate in these services. Thus, *Chapter Five: To What Extent Did Even Start Families*

Participate in the Services Offered? reports the participation outcomes of parents and children in all components of the educational services. In addition to the participation outcomes for the entire Even Start population, we also identified families that are extremely needy (most in need). *Chapter Six: Do Projects Serve the Families Most in Need?* presents focused analyses of extremely needy families and the extent of their participation in the Even Start program.

Program year 1994-95 was also the first year under this evaluation in which data to assess the effectiveness of the Even Start program were collected. While these data allow us to examine participant progress over only one year, they show promising signs of benefits of Even Start services as presented in *Chapter Seven: What Are the Educational and Developmental Outcomes of Even Start Participants?* In *Chapter Eight: Do Program Outcomes Vary Depending on Project and Participant Characteristics?*, the preliminary findings on the potential influence of various project characteristics and service delivery practices on participants' educational progress are reported.

In *Chapter Nine: How Is the Even Start Program Implemented?*, we return to project-level information. While Chapter Three describes the nature and intensity of services offered to participants, Chapter Nine documents the administrative context of Even Start projects, level of resources, staffing patterns, problems or challenges to implementing the Even Start model, and issues for which projects need technical assistance.

Finally, *Chapter Ten: Summary and Conclusions*, presents a summary of key findings reported in all previous chapters. Chapter Ten concludes by discussing several issues that will be examined more fully in the next two years of this evaluation using project- and family-level data collected over a longer period of time.

At the beginning of Chapters Three through Nine, a summary of key findings from the first evaluation and from two years of this evaluation highlights general trends, major developments, and areas of stability. These overviews provide a context in which to discuss the 1994-95 findings in greater detail.

Chapter Two

Even Start National Evaluation

Authorizing Legislation

Section 1209 of the reauthorized Even Start legislation requires an independent evaluation of the projects funded under Even Start.[3] The goal of this evaluation as stated is to:

(1) determine the performance and effectiveness of programs ... and

(2) identify effective Even Start programs ... that can be duplicated and used in providing technical assistance to federal, state, and local programs.

In addition to the congressionally required national evaluation, each state-administered Even Start project is required to conduct a local evaluation. The Migrant Education Even Start and the tribal Even Start projects, as direct grantees, are also required to conduct such an evaluation annually.

Further, for the 1994-95 Program Year, Even Start projects were encouraged to submit evidence of their effectiveness for approval by the Department of Education's Program Effectiveness Panel (PEP). A project approved by the PEP was entered into the National Diffusion Network (NDN). The project could then apply to NDN for additional dissemination funds as a developer/demonstrator project. These evaluation activities were primarily the responsibility of individual projects.

The First Even Start National Evaluation

In January 1990, the Department of Education awarded the first contract for a national evaluation of the Even Start program. The evaluation, which was completed in April 1994, was based on the National Evaluation Information System (NEIS) compiled from all Even Start projects and an In-Depth Study of ten projects. Some of the local projects also conducted other local evaluation studies and applied for effectiveness review by the PEP and inclusion in the NDN.

Components of the First Evaluation

The main component of the first national evaluation, the NEIS, was designed to collect a common set of data from each Even Start project and Even Start participants. The NEIS provided ongoing descriptive information about the Even Start program, including the types of projects funded, the services provided, the collaborative efforts undertaken, and the obstacles to program implementation. The system also provided detailed information describing the families participating in Even Start, the services they received, and the progress they made in areas such as adult basic skills, children's school readiness, and parent-child interactions.

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[3] A full text of the Even Start legislation appears in Appendix A.

The second component of the first evaluation was an In-Depth Study (IDS) designed to complement the broad-based data collected from all Even Start projects through the NEIS by providing detailed information on a subset of 10 purposively selected grantees. The IDS focused on the short-term outcomes of Even Start on adults and children. Five projects implemented a design where families were randomly assigned to Even Start or a control group.

Current National Evaluation

In March 1994, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the second national evaluation contract to Fu Associates, Ltd., with a subcontract to Abt Associates Inc. This four-year study continues to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Even Start Program. We begin this chapter by presenting the research questions addressed in this evaluation. In general, these questions extend the same critical issues examined in the first national evaluation. The four components of the current evaluation are described in the second section.

Research Questions Guiding the Current Evaluation

The current national Even Start evaluation is designed to address four major questions, each associated with a set of more specific sub-questions. While this list includes all research questions articulated at the initiation of this evaluation, some of the questions require accumulation of data over time. For instance, the first Interim Report was restricted largely to descriptions of the projects and how they implemented the Even Start model. This report will address most, but not all, of the issues listed under all four key questions.

1. ***Who is served by the program and what services do they receive? Is the program reaching the appropriate target population?***

- What are the characteristics of family units participating in Even Start?
- What are the background characteristics of adults who participate in Even Start (e.g., gender, age, race/ethnicity, employment status, annual income, primary language)?
- What is the educational history of adults who participate in Even Start? What percentage of adults enter with a high school diploma or a GED and what are their characteristics?
- What are the background characteristics of children who participate in Even Start (e.g., gender, age, race/ethnicity, presence of handicapping condition, primary language)?
- What are the program participation histories of children who participate in Even Start?

- How do the characteristics of Even Start adults compare with the characteristics of participants in adult education programs nationally?

- How do the characteristics of Even Start children compare with the characteristics of participants in Title I and Head Start programs?

- How do background and literacy characteristics of adults and children vary across projects? Is it possible to identify sets of projects that appear to be using very different targeting criteria? Do some projects appear to target "high need" populations while others target "low need" populations?

- How many families participate in Even Start? In each of Even Start's core services?

- What percentage of families participates in each of Even Start's three core services? In all core services?

- How long do families participate in Even Start (how many months are services received)?

2. ***How is the federal funding spent on the program? How many of the projects are well implemented?***

- What is the geographic and urban/rural distribution of Even Start projects?

- What is the federal cost for Even Start projects? What services are purchased with Even Start funds?

- How are families recruited into Even Start? How do projects target recruitment efforts?

- What local evaluation activities are being undertaken by Even Start projects?

- What is the nature of services in early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education offered by the project? What activities does the project offer for parents and children together? What is the nature of home visits offered by the project? What types of support services are provided to participants?

- What types of collaborations exist between Even Start and other agencies? What types of agencies are collaborators?

- What is the training and experience of staff who provide Even Start services?

- How long do Even Start families stay in the program?

- What barriers exist to successful program implementation?

- Are the differences in program implementation associated with factors such as project cohort, length of time that the project has had a grant, area of the country?

3. How well does the Even Start basic model work? Do participants perform better on key measures than similar persons who do not participate?

- What gains are observed for Even Start children on measures of school readiness and vocabulary?

- What gains are observed for Even Start adults on measures of functional literacy, GED attainment, employment status, annual income, parent expectations, and parenting skills?

- With what degree of confidence can any observed gains be attributed to participation in Even Start rather than to other factors?

4. What are effective practices and programs?

- What participant characteristics (e.g., educational level of adults at entry, age of parent, size of family) are associated with positive outcomes?

- What project characteristics (e.g., urban/rural location, degree of implementation, year-round versus school-year operation schedule, high federal cost per family versus low federal cost per family) are associated with positive outcomes?

- What staff characteristics are associated with positive outcomes?

- What service characteristics (e.g., amount of core service received, percentage of core services delivered at home versus in a center, percentage of core services delivered to parents and children together) are associated with positive outcomes?

- Is it possible to define subgroups of families based on need criteria (e.g., income, entry education level), and determine whether outcomes vary across the subgroups?

In the second national evaluation, the questions listed above are addressed by conducting four related, but distinct research activities. They are described in more detail below.

Components of the Current Evaluation

The second national evaluation consists of four components:

(1) Even Start Information System (ESIS) to collect data from all projects;
(2) The Sample Study to collect outcome data from 57 selected projects;
(3) Site visits to Migrant Education Even Start projects; and
(4) Site visits to Even Start projects for Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

In addition to the four components of the national evaluation conducted by the independent evaluator, the local projects continue their local evaluations and PEP/NDN activities. The components of the national and local Even Start evaluation activities are summarized in Exhibit 2.1.

Exhibit 2.1. Components of the Even Start Evaluation

National Evaluation Activities

Evaluation components	Target population	Types of data collected	Data collection procedures and years	Basic research questions	Analysis plan	Funding sources for data collection and data analysis
ESIS	All Even Start projects and participants	Participant characteristics, services, implementation, costs, participation outcomes	Parent Interview, Project Questionnaire 1994-1997	Who is served by the program and what services do they receive? Is the program reaching the appropriate target population? How well was the federal funding on the program spent? How many of the programs were well implemented?	Descriptive analysis, review against Even Start goals	Data collection: Local project evaluation budget Data analysis: Fu/Abt Associates
Sample Study	Even Start participants in 57 selected Even Start projects	Outcomes: school readiness, adult literacy skills, home environment, program participation	Child and adult tests (PSI, PLS-3, TABE, CASAS), Family contact logs 1995-1997	How well does the basic Even Start model work? Do participants perform better on key measures than similar persons who do not participate? What are effective practices and programs?	Compare against national norms and data from other national programs	Data collection: Local project evaluation budget Data analysis: Abt Associates
Study of Migrant Education Even Start Projects	Three Migrant Education Even Start projects	Special issues regarding program implementation, effective practices, applicability of the ESIS	Staff interview, observations of educational activities 1994	What issues are special to implementing Even Start programs for migrant families? What are promising practices? How well does the ESIS capture the unique features of these projects?	Description of program operations, summaries of interviews and observations	Data collection and analysis: Fu/Abt Associates
Study of tribal Even Start Projects	Four tribal Even Start projects	Special issues regarding program implementation, effective practices, applicability of the ESIS	Staff interview, observations of educational activities 1995	What issues are special to implementing Even Start programs on Indian reservations? What are promising practices? How well does the ESIS capture the unique features of these projects?	Description of program operations, summaries of interviews and observations	Data collection and analysis: Fu/Abt Associates
Local Evaluation Activities						
Local models evaluation for PEP/NDN qualification	Even Start projects that qualify. Even Start participants and comparison/control group, if appropriate	Participant characteristics, coordination, services, implementation costs, school readiness, adult literacy, parent/child interaction	Testing and parent interviews 3rd-4th year of grant	Is the project exemplary? Is it a transferrable model?	Compare gains within the project to those of similar local families or to national norms	Data collection and analysis: Local project evaluation budget
Other local evaluation	Conducted at local level	Additional information desired by local administrators	Proposed in project application All years of grant	How does the project meet specified local needs?	Depends on questions	Data collection and analysis: Local project evaluation budget

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The ESIS represents a modification of the NEIS used in the earlier evaluation. Like the NEIS, the ESIS is designed to collect a common set of data from all Even Start projects. The purpose of the ESIS is to provide ongoing descriptive information about the Even Start program, including: information about the participating families; the types of projects that have been funded; the services that they provide; the collaborative efforts that they have undertaken; and the obstacles that exist to program implementation.

Data from the ESIS are used to make assessments at the national level. Data are aggregated across all projects to describe the Even Start program and its outcomes as a whole. The data are also used to categorize programs into different subgroups for further analysis. In particular, the data are used to identify projects that have varying degrees of service intensity and to examine the relationships of this project characteristic to participation and educational outcomes of families.

The ESIS contains four data collection forms designed to provide data that address the research questions listed above. Each Even Start grantee is responsible for completing the following ESIS forms:

Form A: Preliminary Project Information. This form collects information on the community context for the project and provides the evaluation contractor with contact person names and addresses.

Form B: Project Description. This form collects data on the project budget, program design, recruitment strategies, family education services, family support services, staffing, implementation barriers, technical assistance needs, and local evaluation.

Form C: Participant Characteristics at Intake. This form collects information on the socioeconomic status of the participating families and the demographic characteristics and educational background of each program eligible parent and participating child.

Form D: Participation in Services. This form identifies the educational and non-educational services in which each adult and child participated during each program year.

Sample Study

The purpose of the Sample Study is to provide data on the entry status and outcome gains for families participating in Even Start. Information about program outcomes for children and parents, as well as detailed participation data, are being collected from a sample of 57 projects. This group will collect the Sample Study data for two or three years. This approach minimizes the overall burden of data collection for this evaluation and allows for collection of data across a time period that encompasses most families' period of participation in Even Start.

The 57 projects were randomly selected to represent urban and rural areas in all regions of the country. Also, the projects selected were those that were initially funded in 1992 or 1993 so that in 1994-95 Program Year they were in their second or third year of operation.

Projects included in the Sample Study administer assessment tests to monitor the impacts of the Even Start educational services on participating parents and children. The outcomes of early childhood education—school readiness and language development—are assessed using the following tests:

- The Preschool Inventory (PSI) for school readiness skills; and
- The Preschool Language Scale-3 (PLS-3) to measure language development.

To examine the outcomes of adult education, projects in the Sample Study have the choice of administering one of two tests to each participating adult:

- The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), an adult-oriented functional assessment system that measures a broad range of adult literacy skills and their application in real life domains; or

- The Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Reading and Mathematics subtests for participants in GED preparation and some adult secondary education programs.

To assess the outcomes of parenting education, the Sample Study projects use:

- The Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) Screening Questionnaire.

Only families **new** to Even Start were included in the Sample Study to get a true baseline measure of adult and child skills prior to participation in the program. In addition, only families in which at least one adult and one child spoke either Spanish or English were selected, because the measures are available in only these two languages.

Multiple parents and children from the same family could be included in the Sample Study. Unlike the first evaluation, where projects were instructed to select a target adult and child for testing, projects in the Sample Study were told to include parents who were eligible for and expected to participate in Even Start core services. All children in the family who were between 2½ and 5½ years at program entry and would be participating in early childhood education provided by Even Start or a collaborating agency were to be tested.

Projects in the Sample Study were selected in the spring and summer of 1994 and received training on the Sample Study measures and procedures in August and September of 1994. Pretest measures were to be administered to parents and children within 30 days of the start of program services. The posttest was to take place at the end of the 1994-95 program year or when the family was planning to exit the program (whichever came first, as long as it was at least three months after the pretest). Families still enrolled in Even Start in the spring of 1996 will be tested again as a one-year follow-up. Families that enroll in these 57 projects in the fall of 1995 will also be administered the pretest and posttest in 1995-96 and the follow-up test in 1997.

Site Visits to Migrant Education Even Start Projects and Tribal Even Start Projects

The current evaluation includes site visits to three Migrant Education and four tribal Even Start projects. The visits focus on the special features of these Even Start projects and on the appropriateness of the ESIS for collecting data from these sites. Information gathered from the site visits are summarized in two reports to be published separately.

Scope of the 1993-94 Evaluation

The first program year reported under the current evaluation was the 1993-1994 year. Due to an extreme delay in starting the second evaluation, only the project-level data were collected. Of the 490 projects operating Even Start, 90 percent (439 projects) returned their evaluation data by the final due date.[4] The *1994 Interim Report* contained detailed descriptions of how the Even Start projects were implemented across the nation, what difficulties projects had in implementing their programs, what services were offered to families, how the services of collaborating agencies were coordinated, and to what extent the three core educational components were integrated. Although the evaluation lacked information about the participating families, the program implementation data were useful, particularly since the program grew by nearly 100 new projects in the 1993-94 year.

Scope of the 1994-95 Evaluation

Universe Study

Based on reports from all Even Start State Coordinators and the U.S. Department of Education that administers the special set-aside grants, a total of 513 projects operated the program in 1994-95. Of these, 93 percent (476 projects) returned evaluation data by the final due date. The 37 projects that are not included in the evaluation analyses were distributed across 24 states, in all regions of the country. Thus, the exclusion of these projects from analysis should not bias the national program description. The evaluation results presented in this report are highly representative of the projects nationwide, by region, and by state.

The 476 projects that submitted evaluation data represent all three types of grantees as shown in Exhibit 2.2. The distribution of these 476 reporting projects by state is presented in Exhibit B.1 in Appendix B.

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[4] In the first year of this evaluation, information from some states was inconsistent and uncertain regarding how many projects and which projects should be included. The confusion resulted, in part, from the lack of uniform definitions for terms such as "project," "site," and "grantee." The final count of 490 "projects" may have been an overestimate by some degree. In some cases, multiple sites of a project may have been reported as separate projects.

Exhibit 2.2.

Number of Projects That Submitted 1994-95 Even Start National Evaluation Data

Type of Project	Number (and Percent) of Projects Reporting	Number of Projects Operating in 1994-95
State-administered Even Start Projects	458 (93%)	490
Migrant Education Even Start Projects	11 (79%)	14
Tribal Even Start Projects	7 (78%)	9
Total	**476 (93%)**	**513**

Exhibit reads: For the 1994-95 national evaluation, 458 state-administered Even Start projects submitted data, representing 93 percent of the total of 490 state-administered projects operating in 1994-95.

The 476 projects reported at least some data on a total of 28,534 families, 36,752 parents, and 52,757 children. Chapters Three through Six and Chapter Nine of this report present the findings from the analysis of these project-, family-, and individual-level data.

Sample Study

Of the 57 projects in the Sample Study, we received assessment test data from 48 projects (84 percent). Exhibit 2.3 shows the number of parents and children with valid test data from the Sample Study. Individuals with out-of-range scores or missing data were excluded from these counts. In addition, posttests that were administered less than three months after pretest were not included in the analyses.

There are approximately 450 children tested at pretest on the PSI and PLS-3. There are fewer parents than children in the study (approximately 140 with CASAS and 310 with TABE) for two reasons: (1) the TABE and CASAS are administered in English only; and (2) there are more likely to be multiple children but only one parent tested per family. These parents and children represent 171 families with at least one test score at pretest and posttest.

The number of parents and children in the Sample Study was lower than we had expected. This is due, in large part, to the fact that many of these programs that are in their second or third year of operation did not enroll many new families in the fall of 1994 but continued to serve families who had joined in previous years. To augment the number of families with test data, we have asked projects in the Sample Study to include new families who enroll in Even Start for the first time during the fall of 1995. Thus, in the next interim report from this evaluation, we expect to have larger sample sizes with which to assess program effects.

Exhibit 2.3.

Number of Parents and Children in the Sample Study at Pretest and Posttest (1994-95)

Measure	Number with Pretest	Number with Pretest and Posttest
CASAS reading	146	85
CASAS math	126	77
TABE reading	321	125
TABE math	311	118
PSI	455	322
PLS-3 Auditory	488	355
PLS-3 Expressive	484	354
PLS-3 Total	440	353
HOME Screening Questionnaire	575	307

Exhibit reads: 146 parents were tested at pretest on the CASAS reading test; 85 parents were tested at both pretest and posttest on the CASAS reading test.

The number of adults with data from both the pretest and posttest (who can be part of an analysis of change or gain over the program year) drops by nearly half of the original number at pretest; for children, the reduction in sample size is less dramatic. Although the numbers are reduced, the families with only pretest data do not differ significantly from those with pretest and posttest data on demographic variables such as family income, ethnicity, and language spoken in the home. However, significantly fewer families with pretest and posttest data are headed by a single parent (38 percent) than families with only pretest data (55 percent). In addition, mothers' education among the group with pretest and posttest data is almost a grade level higher than among the pretest only group (11.6 years versus 10.9 years).

The group with both pretest and posttest data may have more supports in the family because there is a spouse or partner to share responsibilities. These hypotheses gain support when we look at the reasons for discontinuing participation in the program among families without posttest data. Among the small group of families with exit data (n=50), 28 percent either were dropped from the program due to lack of attendance or left because of a lack of interest; 14 percent left due to a family crisis; and 16 percent moved out of the area. Given these reasons for over one-half of the original Sample Study participants leaving the program, the group of families with both pretest and posttest data may not be representative of all families in Even Start. This threat to the validity of the Sample Study data should be kept in mind when interpreting the program effects presented in Chapters Seven and Eight of this report.

Chapter Three

Who Are the Even Start Families?

The profiles of the Even Start families have not been examined since the 1992-93 program year. In the intervening two years, the program expanded from roughly 340 projects to over 500 projects. This chapter describes the characteristics of Even Start families, giving special attention to features that have remained consistent and that have changed since the first evaluation.

Key Findings: Past to Present

Even Start has expanded steadily since it began in 1989-90 with 76 projects serving approximately 2,500 families. In 1994-95, the 513 projects funded by Even Start served an estimated 31,000 families.

Many characteristics of Even Start participants—notably family structure, parents' ages, sources of income, and income levels—have remained largely unchanged since the program was first implemented. On the other hand, some aspects of Even Start families have changed. For example, the percentages of Hispanic families and parents for whom English is a second language have increased; the percentage of parents who enter Even Start with a high school diploma has decreased.

Characteristics of Even Start Families and Parents

Since 1989-90, about half of Even Start families have been two-parent families. Between 37 and 39 percent have been single-parent families, and 12 to 13 percent have been extended families. The majority of families in 1992-93 were comprised of two adults (53 percent), and most families (78 percent) had one to three children. In 1994-95, the average number of persons per household was 5.5, including parents and children.

Since Even Start began in 1989-90, the majority of parents consistently fall into one of two age ranges: 22-29 years old and 30-39 years old. The ethnic composition of Even Start parents has undergone a striking change since 1989-90 when Hispanic parents represented less than one-quarter (22 percent) of all Even Start parents. In 1994-95, Hispanic parents constituted the largest ethnic group (36 percent). The percentage of white parents decreased from 40 percent in 1992-93 to 34 percent in 1994-95, as did the percentage of African Americans, who represented over one-third (36 percent) of Even Start parents in 1989-90, 26 percent in 1992-93, and 23 percent in 1994-95. Asians and Native Americans have consistently represented a minority of Even Start parents, each accounting for less than 10 percent of the parent population.

The percentage of primarily Spanish-speaking parents rose from 15 percent in 1989-90 to 26 percent in 1992-93. As of 1994-95, 29 percent of Even Start parents spoke Spanish at home; 37 percent of parents did not speak English at home.

The income levels of Even Start families remain low across program years. The Final Report from the first evaluation reported that 66 percent of Even Start families had total annual incomes (earned income and public assistance) of under $10,000 in 1992-93, essentially the same level across the first four years of Even Start. Similarly, for 1994-95, 72 percent of Even Start families had total annual incomes of $11,999 or less.

Since 1992-93, about half of Even Start parents (47 to 49 percent) have reported government assistance as their primary source of income. Slightly less than half (46 percent) of parents have reported wages earned from a job as their primary source of income for the family. However, about three-quarters of Even Start parents enrolling in Even Start are not employed at the time of intake: 76 percent in 1992-93 and 73 percent in 1994-95.

About 11 percent of Even Start adults in 1994-95 already had a high school diploma or GED when they entered the program. This is a substantial decrease from 1992-93 when 21 percent had high school diplomas or their equivalent.

Characteristics of Children

The average age of Even Start children declined from 4.3 years in 1989-90 to 3.7 years in 1992-93. This may have reflected the projects' response to a change in the age range deemed eligible for service. However, in 1994-95, the average age of Even Start children rose to 4.4 years. Boys and girls have been equally represented among Even Start children over the years. Fifty-seven percent of the children in the program during 1994-95 had not participated in educational programs prior to Even Start. This finding is consistent with the 1992-93 evaluation, in which 55 percent of Even Start children had no prior formal educational experiences, including not having attended kindergarten.

Overview of the 1994-95 Findings

We begin with information on how many families participate, followed by their demographic and social/economic characteristics, where they are located across the country, and additional characteristics of parents and children. However, before addressing the detailed findings, it is important to keep in mind some of the most critical and overriding characteristics of Even Start families.

Over 80 percent of Even Start families have annual incomes of less than $15,000, including government assistance; 40 percent have incomes of less than $6,000 per year. Nearly 40 percent of families that enrolled in 1994-95 are headed by single parents. Over one-third of Even Start parents speak languages other than English at home. Over 40 percent of parents have only a 9th-grade or less education at the time of enrollment in Even Start, and very few enrollees had previously participated in any vocational education or employment training. Finally, the three most common reasons for enrolling in Even Start cited by parents are: to further their education and obtain their GED; to learn English; and to improve their children's school success.[5]

How Many Families Are in Even Start?

For the 1994-95 program year, the 476 projects that submitted data reported serving over 28,500 families. Using 60 families as the average number of families per project, we estimate that all projects combined served nearly 31,000 families nationwide. Exhibit B.2 in Appendix B lists the distribution of families, reported by the 476 projects, by region, state, and ethnicity.

The reporting projects submitted data regarding families' participation in Even Start core services on slightly over 25,200 families. The discrepancy between 28,500 and 25,200 families (roughly 3,300) may be attributed to some of the families enrolling but not participating in any of the services and being terminated from the program.

There has been a substantial increase in the number of families participating in the last two years, clearly reflecting the expansion in the number of projects. Even if we use the more conservative count of families (i.e., families for whom we have the participation data) 25,200 for 1994-95 is an increase of approximately 8,700 since the number reported for 1992-93 (St.Pierre et al., 1995). This rate of increase is consistent with the number of projects added since that year and the average of approximately 60 families per project.

What Are the Characteristics of Even Start Families?

This section describes the characteristics of Even Start families, which include:

- Family structure and size;
- Parents' age and ethnicity;

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[5] For the 1994-95 evaluation, the projects were asked to collect the educational and social/economic data only from NEW families that enrolled during this program year. This information is intended as the baseline data that will be used to examine changes over time in the families' educational and employment status. We decided to forego collecting these data on families who had enrolled in Even Start prior to this program year, since it was not certain that all projects could access accurate information on these families' social/economic status AT THE TIME OF THEIR INTAKE one or more years ago.

However, the number of families for whom projects submitted family information suggests that many of them enrolled in the program prior to the 1994-95 year. For some of these families, the social/economic data may reflect their situations at the time of intake, but for some families the data probably reflect their situation one or more years into their participation in Even Start.

Thus, we used "immutable" data such as age and ethnicity for all participants for whom projects submitted data. However, for information that changes over time (e.g., family income, family structure, and parents' educational level), we used data only for families whose intake interview dates were July 1, 1994 or later.

- Level and sources of income; and
- Length of residence in the United States.

Family Structure and Size

As shown in Exhibit 3.1, almost one half (48 percent) of Even Start families consist of two parents with children. Another large number of families (39 percent) are headed by single parents, and 12 percent are extended families. This breakdown is not very different from 1992-93, when 50 percent of the Even Start families were two-parent families; 37 percent were headed by single parents; and 12 percent were extended families.

Exhibit 3.1. Percent of Families, by Family Structure (1994-95)

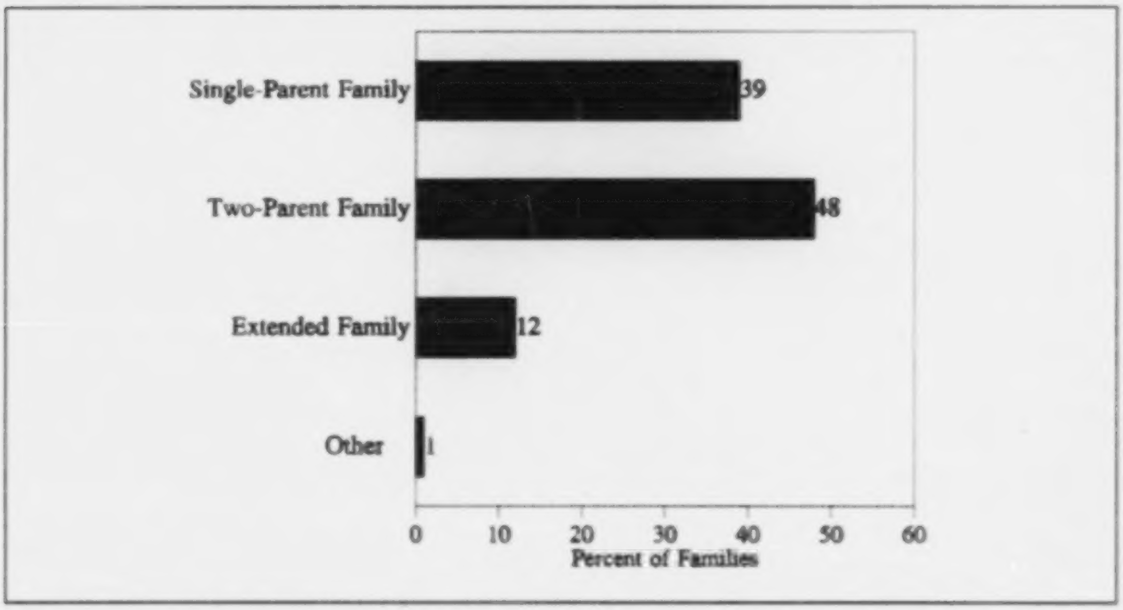

Exhibit reads: 39 percent of families that enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 were single-parent families.

The average size of Even Start families is 5.5 persons; 80 percent of the families consist of three to eight persons. The average family size is very uniform across regions as well as in both rural and urban areas.

As expected, the average family size does vary significantly according to the family structure. The average size of single-parent families is 5 persons. Families headed by two parents average 6 persons, and extended families contain an average of 7 persons (see Exhibit 3.2).

Exhibit 3.2. Average Size of Families, by Family Structure (1994-95)

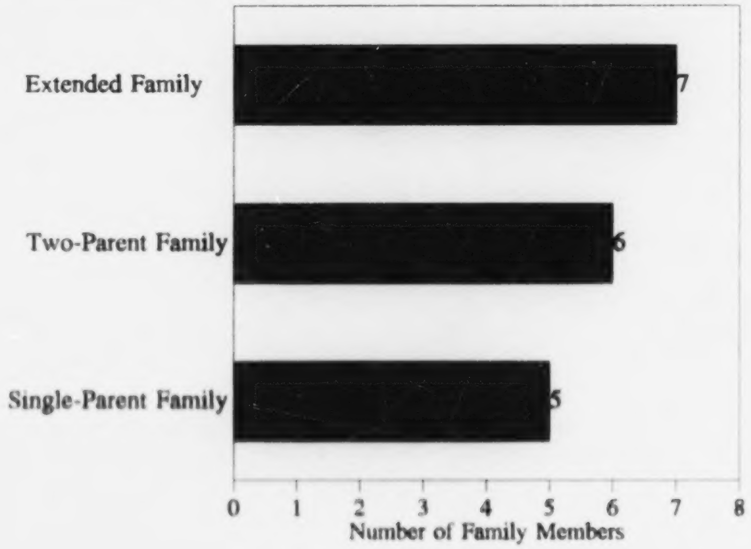

Exhibit reads: Two-parent families enrolling in Even Start in 1994-95 had an average of 6 people per family.

Reflecting the two most common Even Start family structures (two-parent or single-parent families), the number of adults in most families is one or two. As shown in Exhibit 3.3, 50 percent of families have two adults, 33 percent have only one adult, and 9 percent have three adults. The truly large extended families with four or more adults constitute only 8 percent of the Even Start population. The size of Even Start families has remained stable for the past two years.

Exhibit 3.3. Number of Adults (Age 16 or Older) in the Family (1994-95)

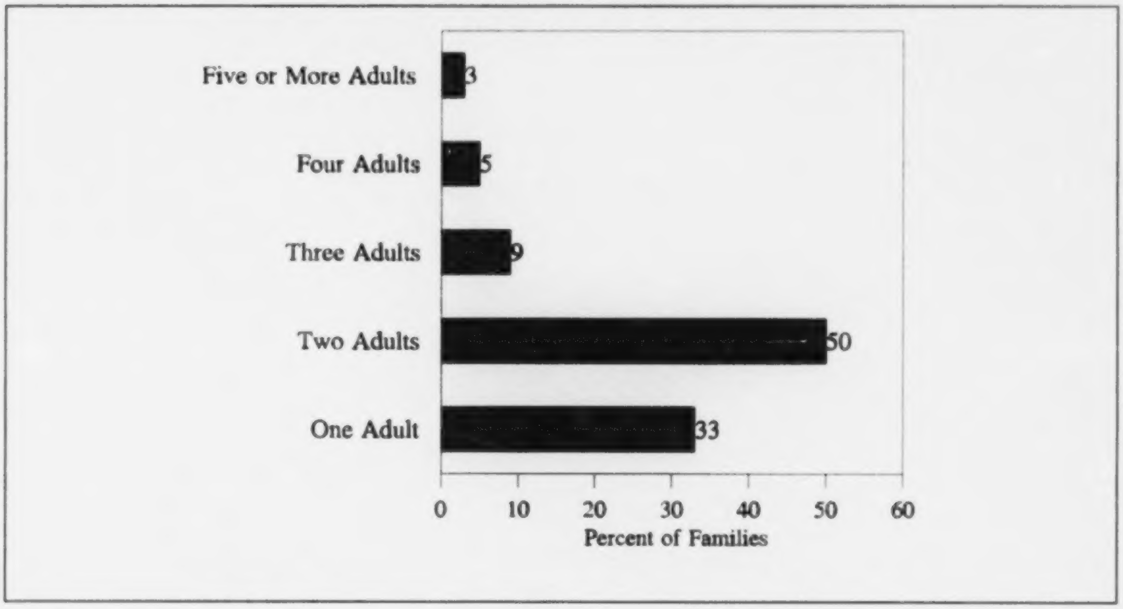

Exhibit reads: 33 percent of families that enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 had one adult per family.

Exhibit 3.4 shows that a majority of families (62 percent) have two or more children per family in the Even Start eligible age range--birth through 7 years. In addition, 60 percent of families have one child older than 7 years, and 35 percent have two or more older siblings of children participating in Even Start.

Exhibit 3.4. Percent of Families, by Number and Age of Children (1994-95)

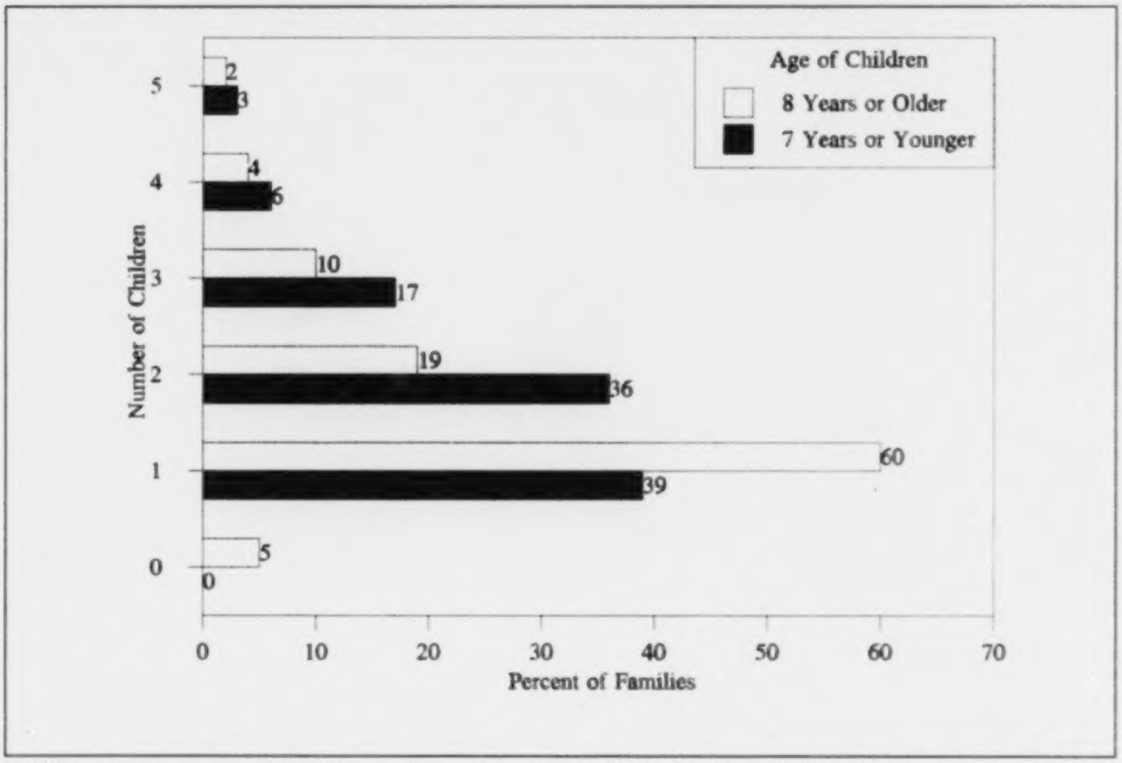

Exhibit reads: 60 percent of families enrolling in Even Start in 1994-95 had one child 8 years or older. 39 percent of families enrolling in Even Start in 1994-95 had one child 7 years or younger.

Age of Parents

Most Even Start parents are in their 20s and 30s. The average age is 29 years; 49 percent are between the ages of 20 and 29 (see Exhibit 3.5). At the extremes of the age range, 9 percent of families have teenage parents, and 10 percent are headed by parents 40 years or older. By comparison, in 1992-93, 62 percent of the parents were 29 years old or younger; 16 percent of the parents were under the age of 21, and 3 percent were under the age of 18.

Exhibit 3.5. Percent of Parents, by Age in December 1994 (1994-95)

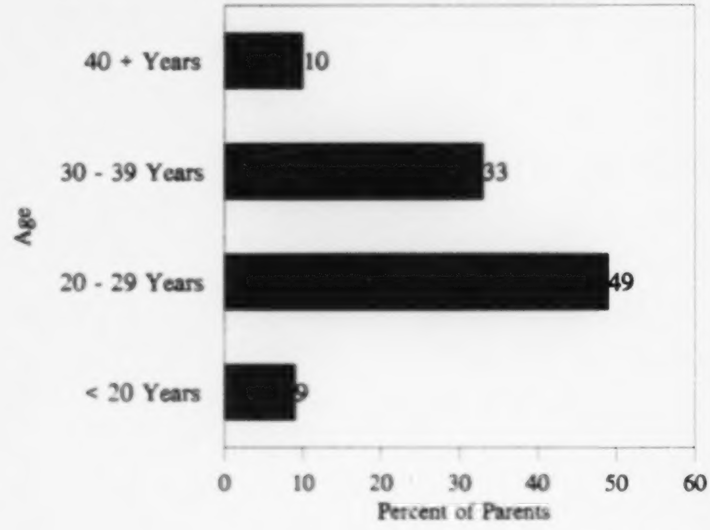

Exhibit reads: 49 percent of parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 were 20-29 years old.

The average Even Start family size increases with the age of parents. On average, families headed by parents in their 20s have 5.3 persons, while families with parents in their 30s have 5.9 persons (see Exhibit 3.6). Extending this same pattern, families with parents 40 years or older have an average of six or more persons. The average family size for teenage parents is nearly five persons. This may occur as a result of many teenage parents living with their own parents.

Exhibit 3.6. Average Family Size, by Age of Parent (1994-95)

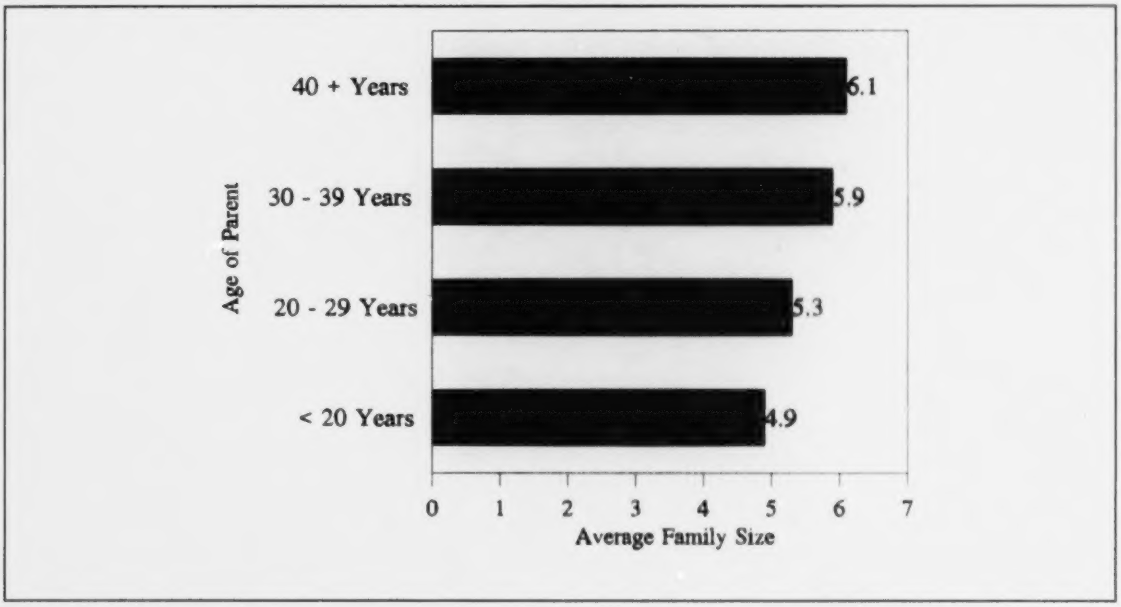

Exhibit reads: Families headed by parents age 40 years or older had an average of 6 people per family.

Thus, the most common Even Start family structure is a couple between the ages of 20 and 39, with three to four children. However, another large group of families is headed by single parents with two to three children.

The Even Start legislation specifies that adult participants be parents who need and are eligible to receive adult education under the Adult Education Act. Data on the relationship between the participating adult and children confirm that almost all adult participants meet this requirement. Ninety-seven percent of adults are parents of participating children. Only a very small percentage of families have grandparents or other adults receiving Even Start services instead of children's parents. We assume these adults are the caretakers of children in families where their parents are not present.

The overwhelming majority of adult participants in Even Start are women, mostly the children's mothers. The gender breakdown of participating adults is 84 percent women and 16 percent men (see Exhibit 3.7). Similarly in 1992-93, 85 percent of the participants were women and 15 percent were men.

Exhibit 3.7. Gender of Adults Participating in Even Start (1994-95)

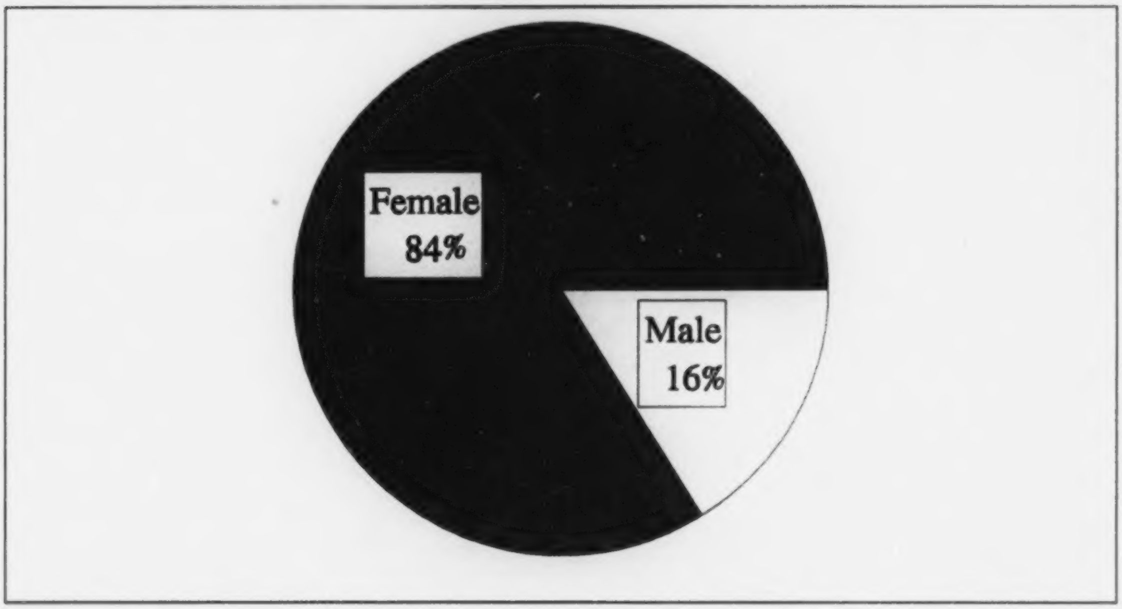

Exhibit reads: 84 percent of adults participating in Even Start in 1994-95 were female.

Ethnic Background

Ethnic backgrounds of Even Start families represent an important factor in monitoring and documenting the program's implementation. Ethnicity has implications for the languages families use at home and, for language-minority groups, their level of English proficiency. The language issues related to ethnicity are critical in planning adult basic education and literacy programs as well as children's language development programs.

For most of the analyses that incorporated the "family" ethnicity, the ethnicity of parents was used. The ethnic breakdown of Even Start children was very similar to their parents'. Further, the level of missing data was higher for children's ethnicity, which may be attributed to a large number of bi-racial children.[6]

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[6] The ESIS form did not provide a response choice to indicate bi-racial backgrounds. This problem has been corrected in the revised ESIS which will be used in the next two years of evaluation. For adults, 9,854 of 36,752 records (27 percent) were missing the ethnicity information. For children, 15,437 of 53,678 records (29 percent) did not include their ethnicity.

Exhibit 3.8. Ethnic Backgrounds of Even Start Parents (1994-95)

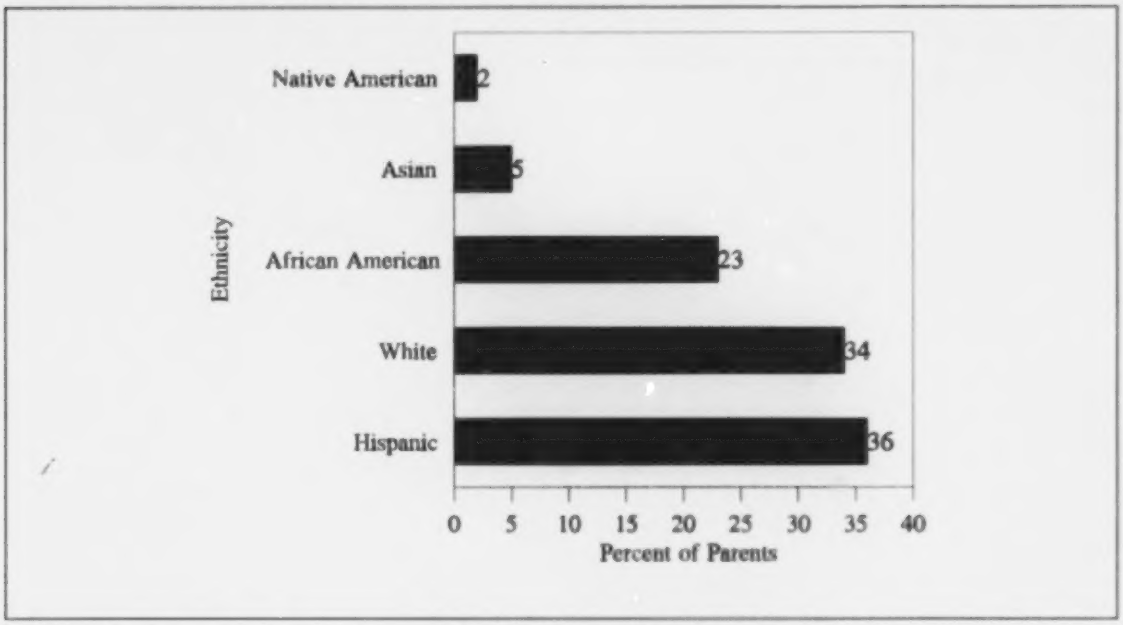

Exhibit reads: 36 percent of parents that enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 were Hispanic.

As shown in Exhibit 3.8, the largest ethnic group in Even Start is Hispanic (36 percent), closely followed by white (34 percent). The ethnic composition of Even Start participants has shifted considerably since the 1992-93 year. In that final year of the first evaluation, the breakdown was: 40 percent white, 26 percent African American, 22 percent Hispanic, 8 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, and 4 percent Native American. The most striking change is the dramatic increase of the Hispanic families which, in effect, lowered the percentages of other groups.

The distributions of ethnic groups vary in different regions of the country. Exhibit 3.9 shows the percentages of the five ethnic groups in each region. The Hispanic families are most concentrated in the South and West. However, even within these regions, they are clustered in several states. As shown in Exhibit B.3 in Appendix B, the five states in the southern region with 20 percent or more Hispanic families in the Even Start program are: Puerto Rico (100 percent); Texas (80 percent); Oklahoma (27 percent); Florida (24 percent); and Maryland (24 percent).

Exhibit 3.9.

Ethnic Backgrounds of Even Start Parents, by Region (1994-95)

	Northeast	South	Midwest	West
Hispanic	25%	33%	16%	67%
White	44%	32%	51%	16%
African American	26%	32%	22%	5%
Asian	4%	2%	8%	7%
Native American	1%	1%	3%	5%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Exhibit reads: 67 percent of Hispanic families that enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 lived in the western region.

For the entire western region, the overwhelming majority (67 percent) of Even Start families are Hispanic. The greatest percentages were reported by Arizona (92 percent), New Mexico (81 percent), California (76 percent); Idaho (66 percent); Colorado (55 percent), and Nevada (55 percent).

African American families represent the next largest ethnic minority group. Their percentage is the highest in the South (32 percent). The southern region states in which African Americans constitute the majority of Even Start families are: South Carolina (84 percent); Mississippi (70 percent); Alabama (57 percent); Georgia (54 percent); and Virginia (52 percent). The Asian and Pacific Islander families make up a relatively small percentage of the Even Start population. The states with sizable percentages of Asian families are: Hawaii (94 percent); Minnesota (35 percent); and Wisconsin (23 percent). While the high percentage in Hawaii is to be expected, the relatively high concentration of Asian families in Minnesota and Wisconsin suggests that many of these are recent immigrants from Southeast Asia who may have difficulties stemming from cultural differences and limited English proficiency.

While Hispanic and Asian families are found in Even Start projects in all regions, their above-average concentration in several southern and western states suggests that the need for ESL programs is particularly critical in these areas.

Altogether, the number of Native American families in Even Start Program is small. The total of 618 families that identified themselves as Native American include 160 families enrolled at seven special set-aside, tribal Even Start projects that submitted data.[7]

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[7] Of the nine tribal Even Start projects operating in 1994-95, two did not submit evaluation data. Of the 618 Native American families in the analysis database, 26 percent were enrolled in the seven tribal Even Start projects.

As reported earlier, two parent-families represent 48 percent of Even Start families as a whole, and single-parent families represent 39 percent. However, a large majority (72 percent) of African American families in Even Start are headed by single parents (Exhibits 3.10). While most of the African American parents do not have a language barrier, many of them have the social/economic difficulties associated with single-parent families. Single-parent families are also more prevalent among Native American families, and fewer in Hispanic and Asian families, compared to the programwide percentage.

Exhibit 3.10. Percent of Families, by Family Structure and Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95)

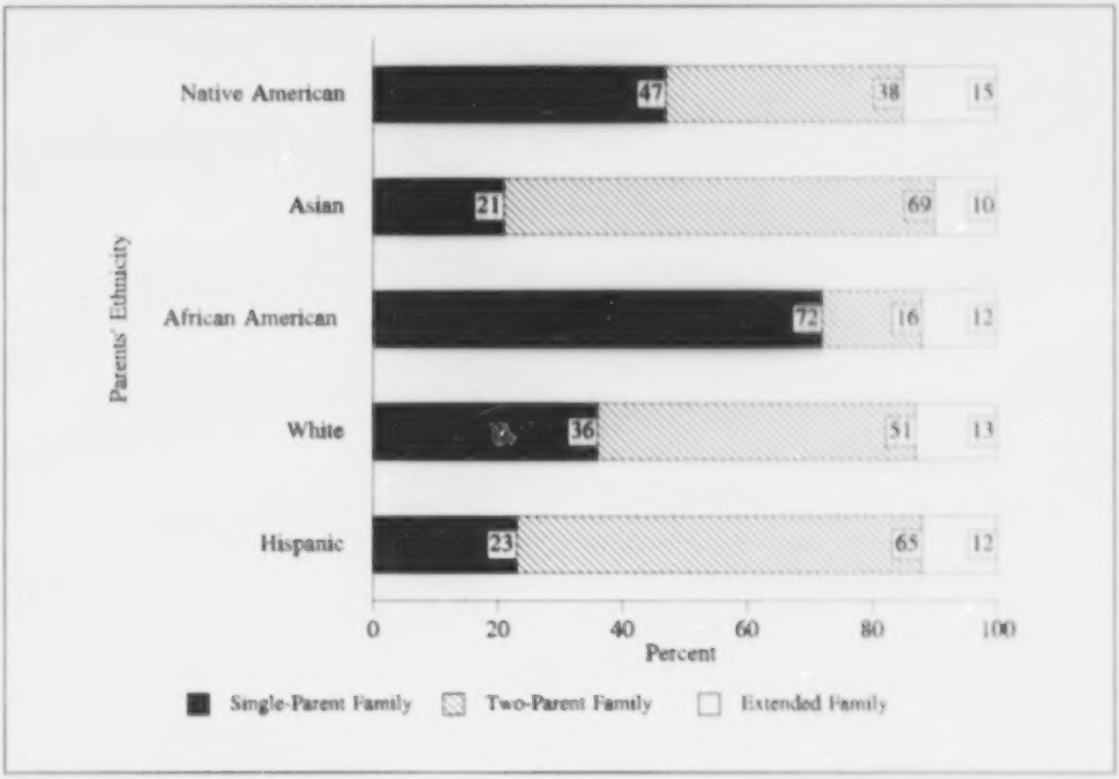

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 72 percent of African American Even Start families were single-parent families; 16 percent were two-parent families; and 12 percent were extended families.

Ethnicity will be included as a key analytic factor as the characteristics of Even Start families are examined in more detail.

Family Economic Characteristics

From the inception of the program, the Even Start projects have been directed to target low-income families that meet all other participation criteria. The data clearly indicate that the families in fact represent the poorest segment of the population.

Exhibit 3.11. Percent of Families, by Family Annual Income (1994-95)

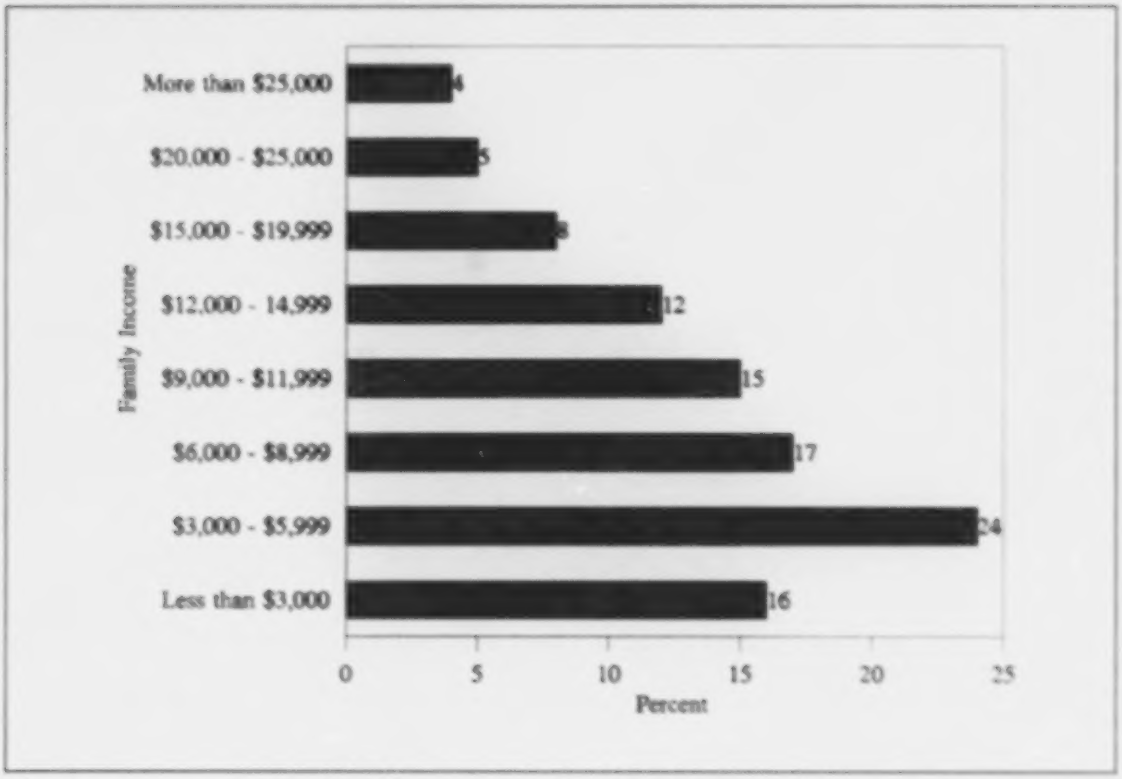

Exhibit reads: 16 percent of families that enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 had an annual income of less than $3,000.

As shown in Exhibit 3.11, over 80 percent of Even Start families have annual incomes of less than $15,000. On average, these families have five to six members, including parents and children. Thus, these incomes are clearly below the poverty level. A large proportion of families reported severely low incomes; 40 percent earn and/or receive annual incomes of less than $6,000. Similarly for the 1992-93 program year, 82 percent of the families had annual incomes of less than $15,000; 35 percent of the families had an annual income of less than $5,000.[8]

Even though most families in the program have very limited incomes, the severity of poverty varied across ethnic groups (see Exhibit 3.12). A vast majority of African American and Native American families in Even Start reported incomes of less than $9,000 per year (78 and 70 percent, respectively). In contrast, the majority of Hispanic and of Asian families had more than $9,000 per year incomes. The proportion of Hispanic and Asian families with incomes of $12,000 or more (38 and 43 percent, respectively) exceeded the percentage of white families in Even Start in this income category (29 percent).

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[8] The income ranges used in the previous evaluation do not exactly coincide with the ranges used in the current evaluation.

Exhibit 3.12.

Percent of Families, by Annual Income and Ethnicity (1994-95)

	Under $9,000	**$9,000-$11,999**	**$12,000-$14,999**	**$15,000 or More**
Hispanic	45%	17%	17%	21%
White	57%	14%	10%	19%
African American	78%	11%	5%	6%
Asian	39%	18%	16%	27%
Native American	70%	12%	8%	10%

Exhibit reads: 78 percent of African American families that enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 had annual incomes under $9,000.

The average income of Even Start families also varies by region. Families in the western region reported the highest income level--around $12,000 per year, followed by families in the Northeast and Midwest, who reported an average income of around $7,000 per year. Families in the South reported the lowest average income at just over $6,000 per year.

Sources of Family Income

Among the families that enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95, 46 percent reported that their primary source of income was employment wages (see Exhibit 3.13). Most of the remaining families relied on government assistance as the major source of income.

The sources of income described for the "Other" category mostly represented forms of government assistance such as social security, Supplementary Support Income (SSI), pensions and retirement benefits, and a combination of wages and government assistance. The percentages of wages and government assistance are essentially the same from those reported for the 1992-93 program year.

Exhibit 3.13. Percent of Families, by Primary Source of Income (1994-95)

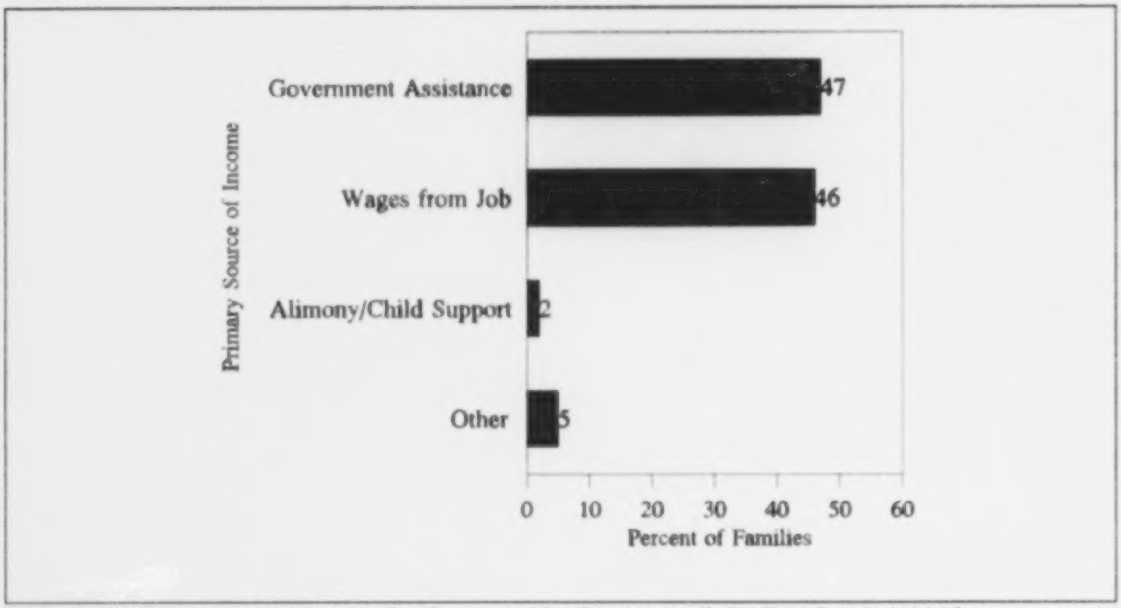

Exhibit reads: Primary source of income for 47 percent of families that enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 was government assistance.

In the intake interviews, 44 percent of parents said that they had previously received welfare benefits, and 43 percent said they were receiving welfare benefits at the time of intake (whether or not this was their primary source of income).

The extent of need for government assistance varies among ethnic groups and by parents' age. The percentage of families receiving government assistance was the highest among African American families, followed by Native American, white, Asian, and Hispanic families, in that order (see Exhibit 3.14). (All differences between groups were statistically significant.) Seven out of ten African American families were receiving assistance while about three out of ten Hispanic families were receiving assistance. Even with this assistance, the African American families reported a significantly lower income level than any other ethnic group.

Exhibit 3.14. Percent of Parents Receiving Government Assistance at the Time of Intake, by Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95)

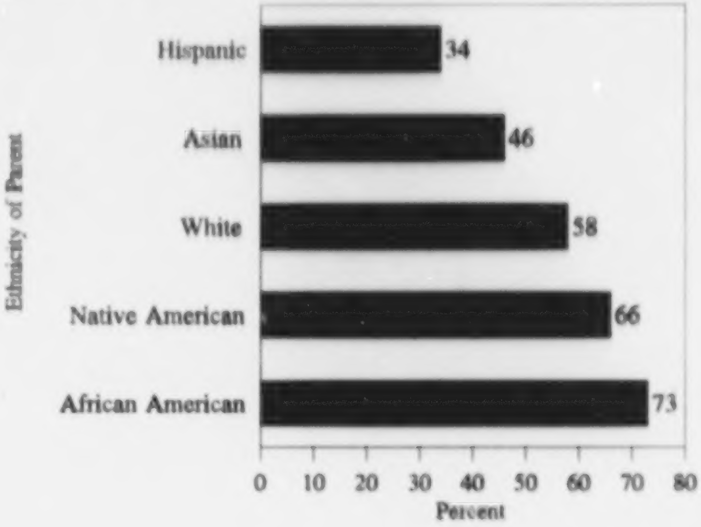

Exhibit reads: Primary source of income for 34 percent of Hispanic parents enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 was government assistance.

The difference in the pattern of welfare receipt across age groups is less pronounced. However, nearly seven out of ten parents who were younger than age 20 were receiving government assistance (see Exhibit 3.15).

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Exhibit 3.15. Percent of Parents Receiving Government Assistance at the Time of Intake, by Parents' Age (1994-95)

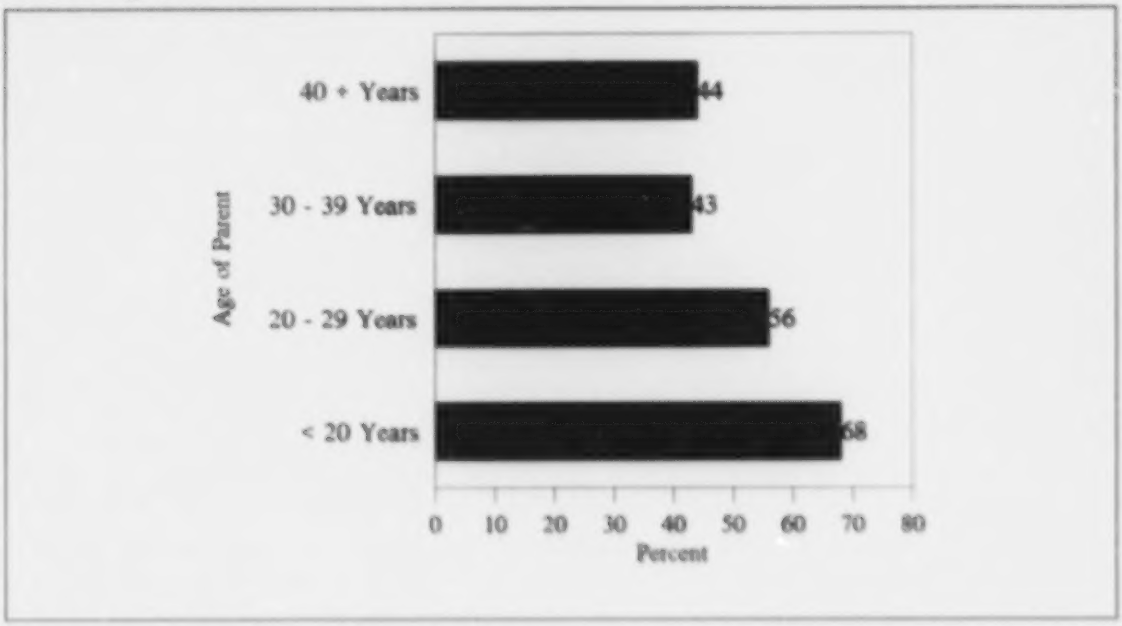

Exhibit reads: 68 percent of parents younger than 20 years were receiving government assistance at the time of enrolling in Even Start in 1994-95.

Length of Residence in the U.S.

While the Hispanic and Asian families in Even Start are less impoverished as a group compared to other ethnic minority groups, they may encounter more problems related to limited English proficiency. While a brief length of residence in the United States does not necessarily equate to poor English proficiency, 32 percent of Hispanic families and 44 percent of Asian families had lived in the United States for 5 years or less at the time of enrollment in Even Start (see Exhibit 3.16). Many of them are likely to be experiencing problems with their second language.

Exhibit 3.16.

Percent of Families, by Ethnicity and Length of Residence in the United States (1994-95)

	Less Than One Year	One to Five Years	More Than Five Years	TOTAL
Hispanic	7%	25%	69%	100%
White	1%	1%	98%	100%
African American	1%	2%	97%	100%
Asian	6%	38%	56%	100%
Native American	0%	0%	100%	100%

Exhibit reads: 7 percent of Hispanic families that enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 had lived in the United States for less than one year.

As shown in Exhibit 3.17, the western region has the largest proportion of recent immigrants (24 percent), while the percentages in the other regions range from 11 to 13 percent. Although the percentages of recent immigrant families are not very high across the board, parents in many Even Start families are limited in English proficiency. We examine further the characteristics of Even Start parents in the next section starting with the extent of English proficiency, especially among the language minority groups.

Exhibit 3.17.

Percent of Families, by Region and Length of Residence in the United States (1994-95)

	Less Than One Year	One to Five Years	More Than Five Years	TOTAL
Northeast	2%	10%	88%	100%
South	3%	8%	89%	100%
Midwest	3%	10%	87%	100%
West	3%	21%	76%	100%

Exhibit reads: 2 percent of families that enrolled in Even Start projects in the Northeast (in 1994-95) had lived in the United States for less than one year.

What Are Additional Characteristics of Even Start Parents?

In this section, we describe additional characteristics of Even Start parents that have implications for the design and implementation of Even Start services. They include: language spoken at home; parents' English proficiency at intake; and parents' level of prior education and job training experiences at intake.

ESL Parents' English Proficiency

Of the families that enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95, more than one-third (37 percent) reported using languages other than English at home (see Exhibit 3.18). This is not surprising since over 40 percent of Even Start parents are Hispanic, Asian, or Pacific Islanders. There has been a small increase since 1992-93 of families that use Spanish at home. This increase is most likely due to the increase of Hispanics in the Even Start program; 26 percent of all families in Even Start spoke Spanish at home in 1992-93 compared to 29 percent in 1994-95.

Exhibit 3.18. Percent of Families Using English or Other Languages at Home (1994-95)

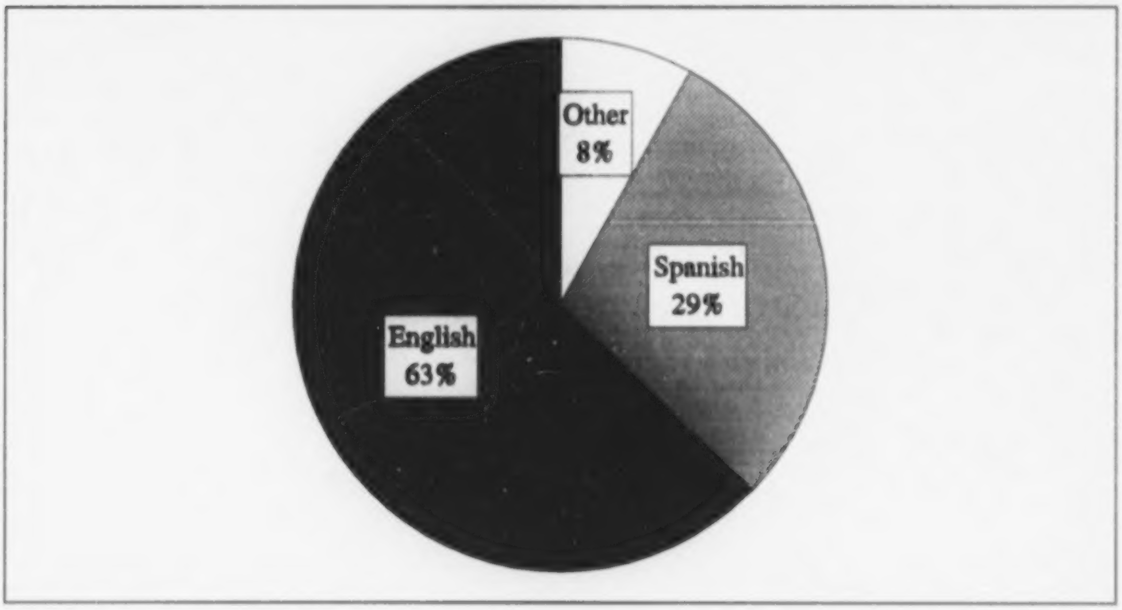

Exhibit reads: 63 percent of families that enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 had parents speaking English at home.

As shown in Exhibit 3.19, almost all white and African American parents speak English at home. While Spanish is spoken at home by the majority of Hispanic parents, 14 percent use English at home. Similarly, 12 percent of Asian parents use English at home. A large majority of Native American families speak English at home; however, 12 percent reported speaking languages other than English at home.

Exhibit 3.19.

Percent of Families, by Language Spoken at Home and Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95)

	English	Spanish	Other
Hispanic	14%	82%	4%
White	97%	<1%	3%
African American	96%	<1%	4%
Asian	12%	<1%	88%
Native American	89%	1%	11%

Exhibit reads: 14 percent of Hispanic families that enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 had parents speaking English at home.

Roughly 7,950 of 21,310 parents (for whom we received data on the language they speak at home) reported speaking languages other than English at home at the time of intake. About one-fourth of these parents can understand, speak, and read English well or very well (see Exhibit 3.20). However, a majority of these parents have difficulties in understanding, speaking, and/or reading English. They are more limited in their reading abilities; 30 percent reported not being able to read English at all, while 21 and 26 percent indicated total inability to understand or speak English, respectively.

Exhibit 3.20.

Percent of ESL Parents, by Levels of English Proficiency (1994-95)

	Understand English	Speak English	Read English
Not At All	21%	26%	30%
Not Well	50%	50%	47%
Well	21%	17%	17%
Very Well	8%	7%	6%

Exhibit reads: 21 percent of parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 and who spoke languages other than English at home did not understand English at all.

Parents' Educational Background

As a group, Even Start parents bring with them a wide range of educational experiences when they enroll in the program. A very small percentage (1.8 percent) have no schooling, and 13 percent have only an elementary school education (see Exhibit 3.21). At the time of enrollment, parents had 7th- to 9th-grade educations. However, the largest percentage of Even Start parents (41 percent) had reached 10th to 12th grades in high school. On the other hand, 11 percent entered Even Start with a high school diploma or GED, and 5 percent had taken some postsecondary courses.

Roughly 85 percent of new enrollees had not completed high school or earned a GED. The pre-Even Start educational backgrounds of parents may have declined somewhat since 1992-93. The percentages of adults with no high school diploma or GED at the time of intake in 1992-93 were 79 percent for core service participants and 66 percent for non-core service participants.

The distribution of parents' educational backgrounds seems to reflect the combined influences of several factors, some relating to the motivational levels of parents and some relating to projects targeting their recruitment and screening efforts to enroll more families headed by parents with lower educational levels. From the parents' perspective, those who need only a few years of adult education to obtain their GED may be more motivated to finish than those who need many more years of adult education. For many projects, parents with very low levels of education may pose greater difficulties in designing an effective curriculum as well as in retaining them in the program over several years.

Exhibit 3.21. Percent of Parents, by Educational Background at Intake (1994-95)

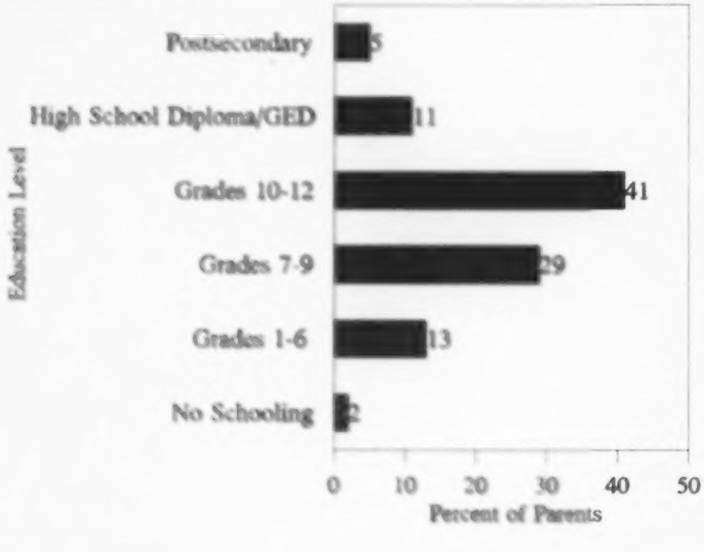

Exhibit reads: 2 percent of parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 had had no schooling prior to enrolling in Even Start.

While a majority of parents reported having reached at least 10th grade, 34 percent of Even Start parents were educated in countries other than the United States. Thus, we examined the average levels of education (at the time of enrollment) by ethnic groups and age of parent. Exhibit 3.22 displays the averages where the levels of education were scaled 1-17 representing 1=No Schooling through 17=College Degree.

The educational levels of non-ESL groups (i.e., white, African American, and Native American parents) average between 10th and 11th grades and do not differ significantly among these groups. However, the Hispanic and Asian parents' educational experiences average between 8th and 9th grades; the differences between their educational levels and the non-ESL groups' averages are statistically significant. Thus, Hispanic and Asian parents, on average, had significantly less formal education than whites, African American, and Native Americans.

Exhibit 3.22.

Average Levels of Education at Intake, by Parent Age and Ethnicity (1994-95)

	Younger Than 20 Years	20-29 Years Old	30-39 Years Old	40 Years or Older	Average Across All Age Groups
Hispanic	10.1	9.8	9.5	7.9	9.5
White	10.6	11.3	11.8	11.2	11.3
African American	10.7	11.6	11.7	11.1	11.5
Asian	8.7	9.4	10.3	8.8	9.7
Native American	11.0	11.6	11.9	9.2	11.4
Average Across All Ethnic Groups	10.6	10.8	10.6	9.5	10.6

Note: On the scale of 1-17: 7=6th grade, 8=7th grade, 9=8th grade, 10=9th grade, and 11=10th grade.
Exhibit reads: Among parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95, Hispanic parents younger than 20 years had reached, on average, the 9th grade in high school.

Exhibit 3.22 also shows that the average educational levels across parents' age groups are fairly constant except for the lower levels reported by parents ages 40 or older who constitute 10 percent of Even Start parents.

Experience with Employment Training and Adult Education

Generally, the Even Start parents are young adults who have completed some years of high school at the time of intake. These background factors may explain why a negligible percentage had participated in employment or vocational training before, or at the time of, enrolling in Even Start (see Exhibit 3.23). Even though over 50 percent of enrolling parents had reached 10th grade or higher, not many had received any form of vocational education. Thus, in addition to lacking a high school diploma or GED, most Even Start parents had no job skills training in schools.

Exhibit 3.23.

Percent of Even Start Parents, by Job Training History (Before and at Time of Enrolling in Even Start, 1994-95)

	Before Even Start	At Intake
Employment Training	6%	4%
Vocational Education	4%	3%
Vocational Rehabilitation	1%	<1%

Exhibit reads: 6 percent of parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 had received employment training prior to enrolling in Even Start.

A somewhat greater percentage of parents had participated in some form of adult education before enrolling in Even Start, particularly at the level of secondary education and GED preparation (see Exhibit 3.24). Despite the high percentage of parents with limited English proficiency (roughly 28 percent), only 10 percent had participated in ESL programs before Even Start. Similarly, while roughly 15 percent of parents enrolled in Even Start with a 6th-grade or lower education, only 6 percent of all enrollees had participated in the beginning or intermediate adult basic education before Even Start.

Exhibit 3.24. Percent of Parents With Previous Adult Education Experiences (1994-95)

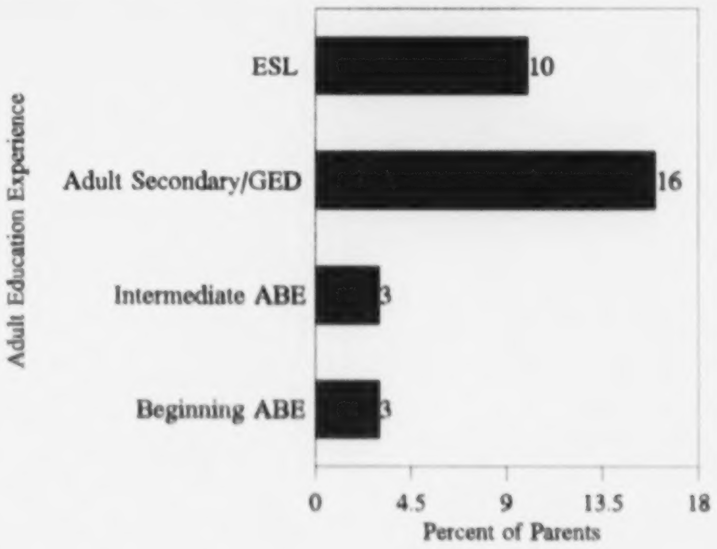

Exhibit reads: 3 percent of parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 had received Beginning Adult Basic Education services before enrolling in Even Start.

Employment Status at Intake

Even though wages from employment were the primary source of income for 46 percent of Even Start **families**, fewer than one-third of **parents** were employed at the time of enrolling in Even Start. This seeming discrepancy may result from almost one-half of Even Start families being headed by couples, many of whom may depend on the earnings of one parent while the other non-employed parent participates in Even Start.

At the time of the intake interviews for the 1994-95 program year, 27 percent of parents were employed, and 73 percent were not employed. Of those who were employed, slightly over one half (58 percent) had full-time jobs.[9]

While the majority of parents were not employed at intake, 45 percent of them were enrolled in educational programs not affiliated with Even Start projects, and 14 percent were actively seeking work (see Exhibit 3.25). However, for the 38 percent who did not fall into either of these categories, Even Start may be the only program that provides them with prospects for educational and economic improvement, as well as contributing to their parenting abilities and their children's development.

Exhibit 3.25. Employment Plans of Even Start Parents Who Were Not Employed at Intake (1994-95)

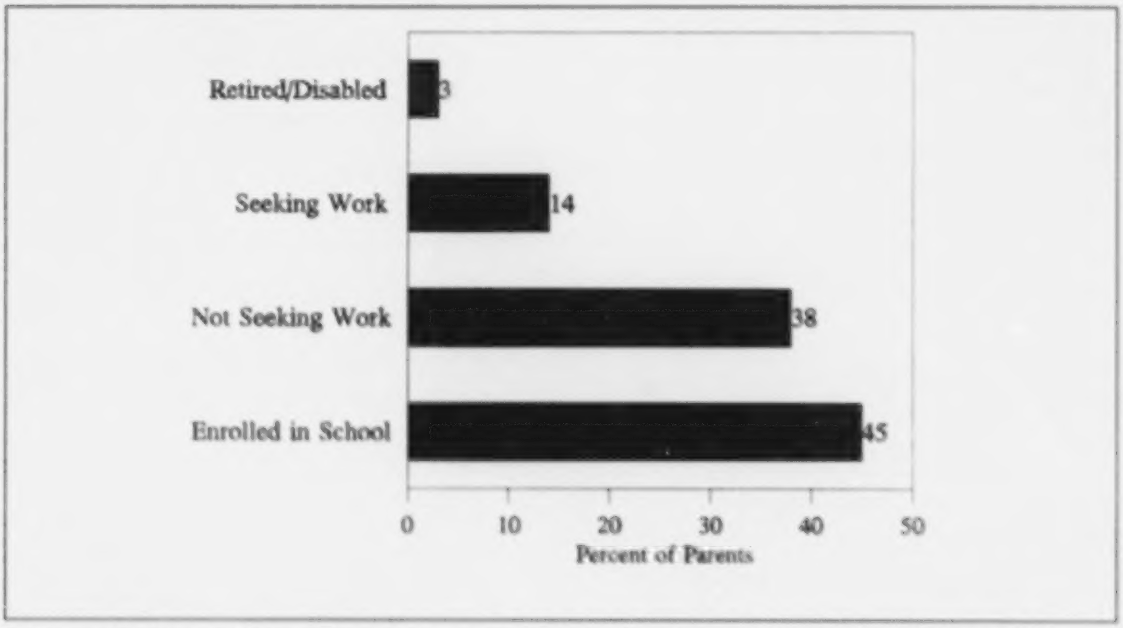

Exhibit reads: 14 percent of unemployed parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 were seeking work.

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[9] These percentages are essentially the same as those reported for the 1992-93 year.

Parents' Reasons for Participating in Even Start

As Exhibit 3.26 shows, educational improvement for themselves was the primary reason that parents cited for enrolling in Even Start (39 percent). The second most common reason, although much less frequent than the first, was to learn English (13 percent), followed closely by a desire to improve their child's school success (12 percent) and to be better parents (10 percent). It should be noted that the intake questionnaire asks parents to state **one** most important reason for enrolling. Many parents who checked "Other" indicated that they had multiple reasons for enrolling, and many of the written answers were combinations of several reasons listed on Exhibit 3.26.

Exhibit 3.26. Percent of Parents, by Reason for Participating in Even Start (1994-95)

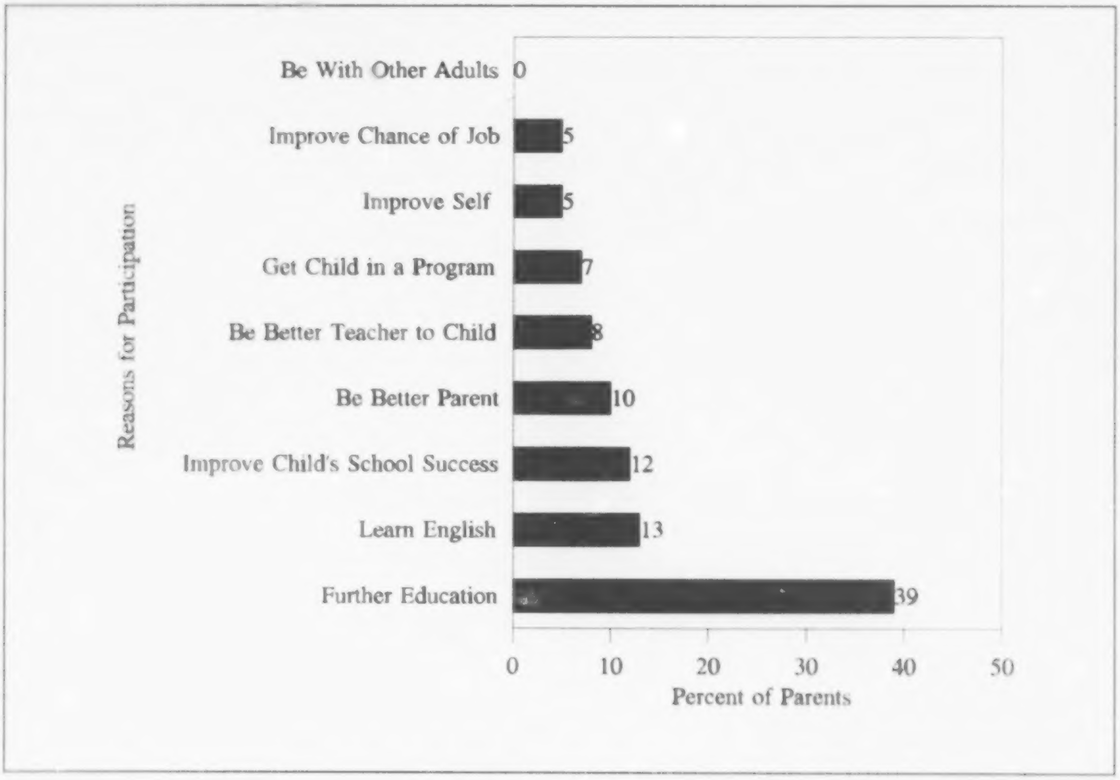

Exhibit reads: 39 percent of parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 stated that the reason for enrolling in Even Start was to further their education and/or to obtain GED.

What Are the Characteristics of Even Start Children?

In the descriptions of Even Start families, we have already presented some information about their children, such as the average number of children per family. This section discusses in more detail additional characteristics of children participating in Even Start core services.

Age and Gender of Participating Children

Any child from birth up to age 8 is eligible to receive core services of the Even Start Program. In addition, children of parents who are in the last stages of completing adult education may continue to receive core services beyond age 8.

The average age of Even Start children is 4.4 years (standard deviation 3.2). However, the children cover the entire range of eligible ages. As shown in Exhibit 3.27, 29 percent are in the birth to 2 years, infant/toddler age group. As the overall average suggests, the largest age group is the 3 to 5 years group; 42 percent of participating children are in this preschool/kindergarten age group. A fairly sizable portion (16 percent) of participating children are in the early elementary grades. Further, the projects reported that 13 percent of children participating in the Even Start core services are 8 years or older.

Exhibit 3.27. Percent of Participating Children, by Age (1994-95)

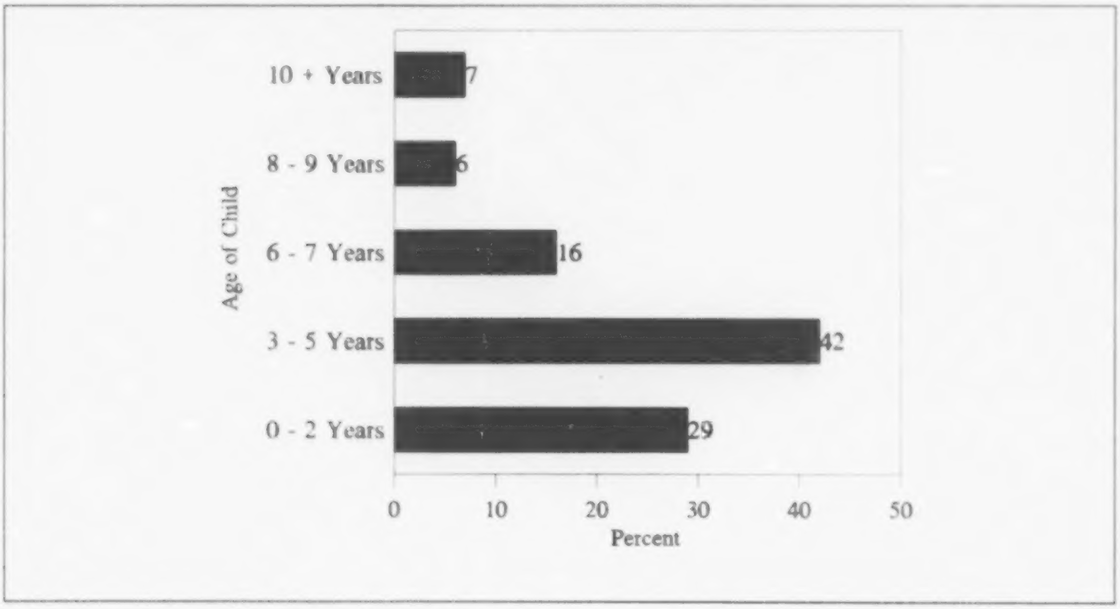

Exhibit reads: 29 percent of children who enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 were between the ages birth through 2 years.

In the course of the first four-year Even Start evaluation, there was a trend for projects to serve an increasing percentage of the infant/toddler age group. The Final Report from the first evaluation indicated that the percentage rose from 27 percent in 1989-90 to 37 percent in 1992-93. Possible reasons for this increase included: a legislative change in 1991 to include infants and toddlers in the Even Start eligible age group; encouragement from the Department of Education to serve the entire eligible age range; and the maturing projects becoming more capable of serving the very young children.

Given the clear linear trend in the previous years, the apparent drop in the percentage of infants and toddlers served during 1994-95 is puzzling. The reason may be that the earlier rise in the proportion of very young children was in response to the legislative change and the heightened encouragement to enroll them by the Department of Education. However, as reported by projects, in many communities, non-Even Start services for infants and toddlers are more scarce than services for older children (see Exhibit 4.4 in Chapter Four). Further, project directors at evaluation conferences have voiced frustrations in trying to design and provide services for the birth to 2 years age group. The recent, apparent decline in the percentage may reflect, at least in part, the difficulties projects face in actually implementing useful services for this age group. Even so, it should be noted that almost one-third of children served are in this age group.

In terms of gender, boys and girls are represented equally among Even Start children (see Exhibit 3.28).

Exhibit 3.28. Gender of Participating Children (1994-95)

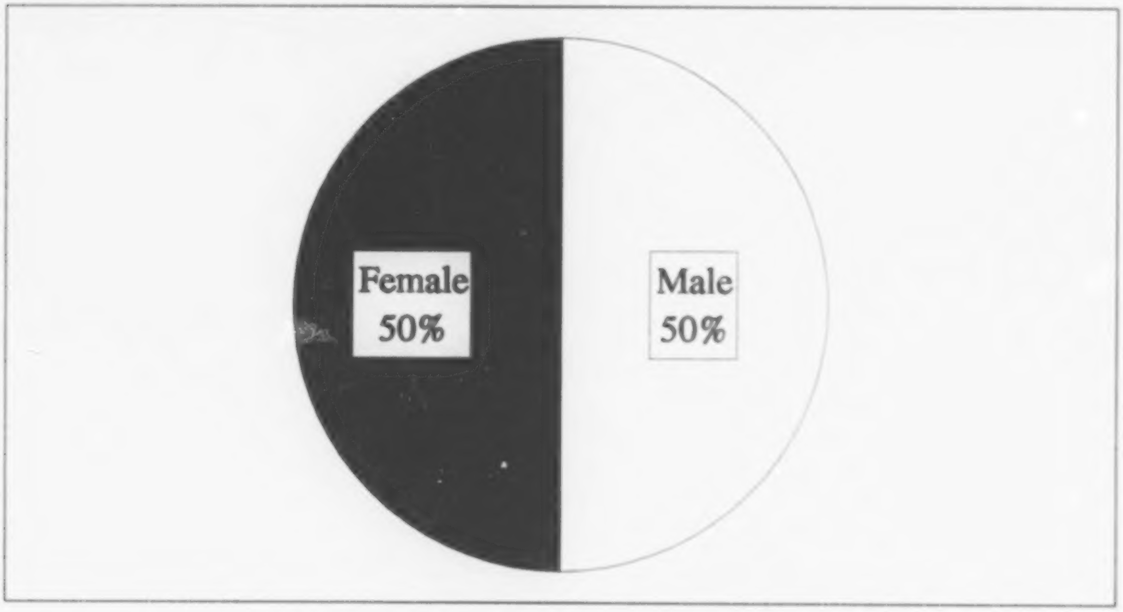

Exhibit reads: 50 percent of children who enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 were girls, and 50 percent were boys.

History of Participation in Non-Even Start Programs

The strong interest among Even Start parents in improving their own and their children's educational prospects is mirrored by the level of participation of children in educational programs not affiliated with Even Start projects, both before and at the time of enrolling in Even Start.

Even before enrolling in Even Start, 48 percent of children had participated in early childhood programs, most notably in Head Start and kindergarten (see Exhibit 3.29). Further, at the time of intake, many children were still in Head Start and kindergarten or had advanced into the primary school grades. Most of the educational services these children received were through public programs. On the other hand, Even Start was the first educational program for 43 percent of the children.

Exhibit 3.29.

Percent of Children Participating in Non-Even Start Educational Programs Before and at Time of Enrolling in Even Start (1994-95)

	Before Even Start	At Intake
Head Start	10%	7%
Title I Preschool	4%	2%
Early Intervention, Early Childhood Special Education	3%	3%
Other Preschool or Infant/Toddler Program	8%	5%
Kindergarten	11%	9%
Primary School (Grades 1-3)	7%	11%
Other	5%	4%
None	43%	38%

Exhibit reads: 43 percent of children who enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 had received no early childhood education services prior to enrolling in Even Start.

The general profiles of the Even Start families that emerge from these descriptive analyses are stark. The families are poor and face multiple social and economic disadvantages including limited educational experiences and, for many, limited English proficiency. Yet, the data also point to the strong motivation on the part of the parents to improve their families' overall well-being by improving their basic and parenting skills and by providing developmentally supportive experiences for their children. In the next chapter, we examine the specific services that Even Start projects offer in support of families' efforts to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

Chapter Four

What Services Do Even Start Projects Provide to Participants?

Even Start projects are mandated by law to provide services in the areas of adult basic education, parenting education, and early childhood education. The program model further stipulates that the educational programs include joint activities of parents and children as well as services that are conducted in participants' homes. In addition, Even Start projects render a wide range of support services to participants. Support services such as providing or arranging for transportation and child care facilitate providing core services by reducing barriers to families' participation.

Key Findings: Past to Present

The types of core educational services and support services that Even Start projects provide to families have not changed greatly over the years. For example, in the area of parenting education, the three activities that were used a great deal in 1994-95 by 90 percent of Even Start projects--(1) building parents' self-esteem; (2) instructing parents on the principles of child development; and (3) joint parent-child activities to promote family literacy--were among those that were widely used by 90 percent or more of projects in 1992-93.

In 1994-95, the projects offered educational services an average of 10 months out of the year. Projects provided, on average, between 31 and 36 hours per month of adult education, 10 hours of parenting education, and between 35 hours and 59 hours of early childhood education each month. In comparison to the previous 1993-94 year, projects provided an average of one hour more per month for both adult education and parenting education components and between 10 and 20 hours more per month for early childhood education (depending on children's age group).

Virtually all projects provide some support services to their families. In 1994-95, the types of support services needed by "all" or "many" of Even Start families were: (1) child care (86 percent), (2) transportation (78 percent), (3) nutrition assistance (74 percent), (4) family support (74 percent); and (5) health care (68 percent). The types of support services needed by families, as well as the prevalence of the needs, have remained relatively constant across the first six years of Even Start.

This chapter begins by describing the context for the services projects offer to families by reviewing where the projects are located and the numbers of families they serve. It then addresses the recruitment and screening of potential families, additional eligibility criteria projects use to target specific types of families, and the impact of these criteria on project enrollments.

The bulk of the chapter examines program design and curriculum for the core educational services, including flexibility in scheduling these services to accommodate participants' time constraints, and the ways that projects integrate service delivery across the three core areas.[10] The chapter concludes by examining the types of support services needed by participants.

Where Are Even Start Projects Located?

In the program year 1994-95, there were 513 projects, including nine tribal and 14 Migrant Education projects. Of these, a total of 476 projects submitted evaluation data by the final data due date. The largest number of projects (41 percent) was in the South. Twenty-one percent of Even Start projects were located in the Midwest; another 22 percent in the West. Fewer projects (17 percent) were in the Northeast[11] (see Exhibit 4.1).

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[10] This chapter and Chapter Nine present information about Even Start projects. The current evaluation collects project-related data on two levels. Some data are collected for each individual project as a unit, that is, each project provides one response for the entire project. However, some projects have implemented different educational models at different project sites. In these cases, detailed descriptions of services offered to participants are reported by sites.

In the context of this evaluation, the term "site" does not refer to a physical or geographical location where a project's services are provided. Instead, the term refers to service delivery designs. Some projects have two or more distinctly different types of approaches (e.g., services designed for teenage parents enrolled at a high school and a different set of services designed for older parents operated through collaboration with a community college and a Head Start program). Projects were instructed to report separate information on multiple sites/designs, if they use more than one service delivery approach.

Among the 476 projects that submitted data for 1994-95, 90 percent had one site/design; 6 percent had two sites/designs; 4 percent had three to seven sites. The total number of project sites reported in 1994-95 was 567. Results of analyses based on project sites are noted as such in the exhibits and in the text in Chapters Four and Nine.

[11] Numbers of projects by region, state and type of community are listed in Exhibit B.3, Appendix B.

Exhibit 4.1. Distribution of Projects, by Region (1994-95)

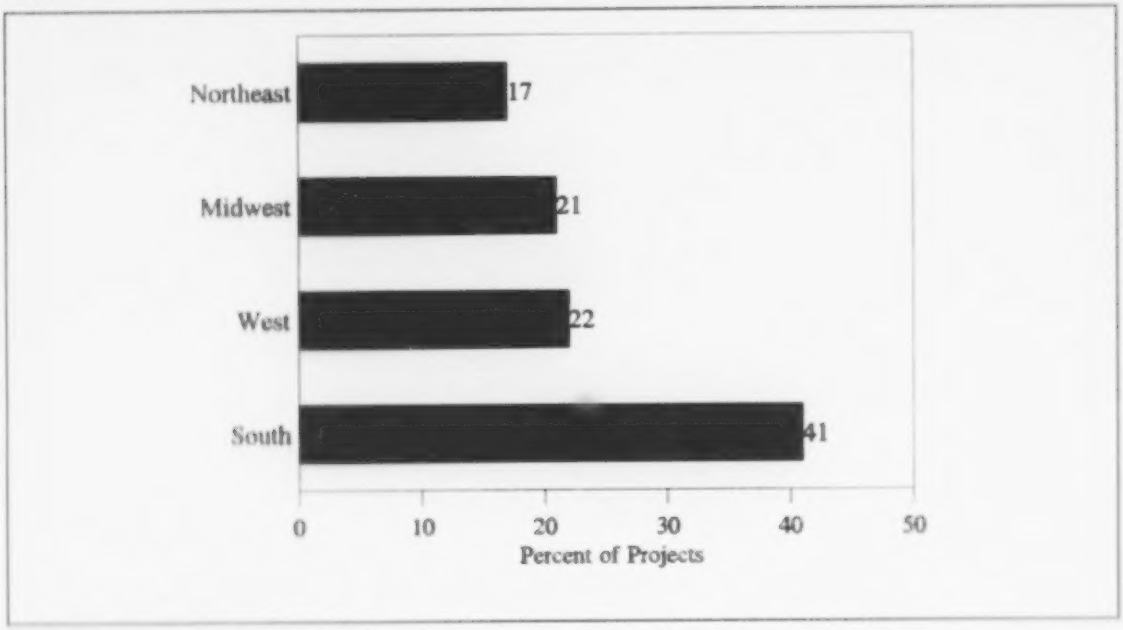


Exhibit reads: 17 percent of 1994-95 Even Start projects were in the Northeast.

Exhibit 4.2. Distribution of Projects, by Community (Urban, Mixed, and Rural) (1994-95)

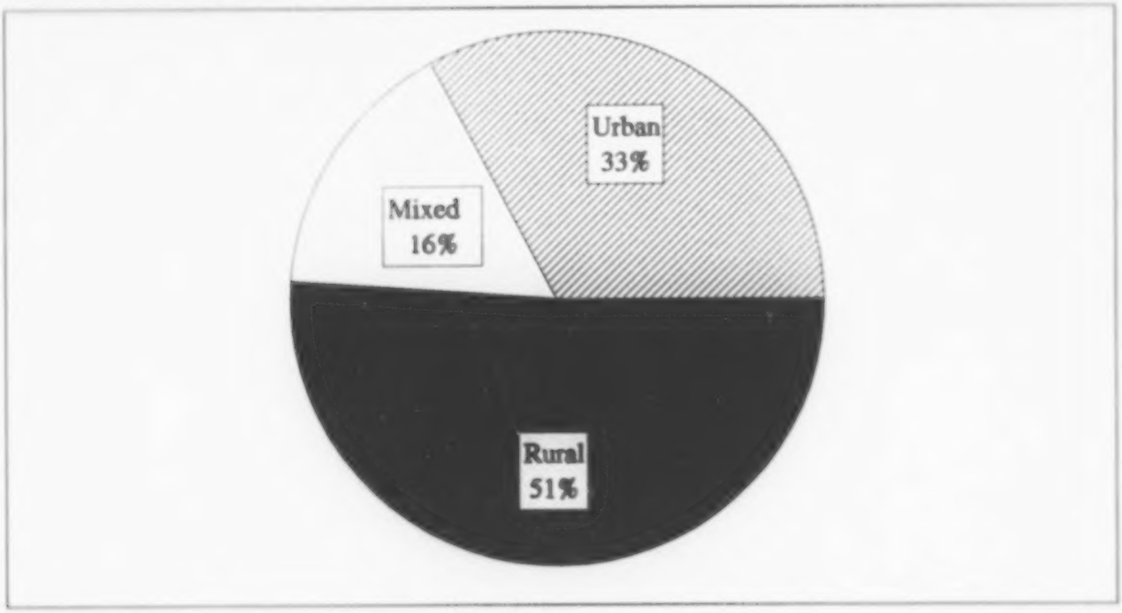


Exhibit reads: 51 percent of 1994-95 Even Start projects were in rural communities.

As indicated in Exhibit 4.2, just over half of all Even Start projects (51 percent) were located in rural areas of the country. Another 33 percent were located in urbanized areas. Less than one quarter of all projects, or 16 percent, were located in areas that contained both urban and rural communities.

The average number of families that projects anticipated to serve was 62. While the average level of families was consistent across regions, there was a significant difference by type of community. Projects in urban and "mixed" communities planned on serving 70 and 78 families per project, respectively. However, the average number that rural projects planned to serve was 52 families.

Across all 513 projects operating in 1994-95, the total number of families the projects anticipated serving was approximately 31,000. This estimate is based on the actual number of families the 476 reporting projects anticipated to serve and additional numbers imputed for the 37 non-responding projects based on the average of 62 families per project.

The 476 reporting projects submitted data for approximately 28,500 families. Exhibit 4.3 shows where these families are located by region and type of community.

Exhibit 4.3.

Distribution of Even Start Families, by Region and Type of Community
(Number and Percent, 1994-95)

	Northeast	South	Midwest	West	Total
Rural	2,151 (8%)	5,954 (21%)	1,830 (6%)	1,860 (7%)	42%
Mixed	780 (3%)	3,621 (13%)	719 (3%)	942 (3%)	22%
Urban	1,906 (7%)	3,323 (12%)	2,624 (9%)	2,572 (9%)	37%
Total	18%	46%	18%	19%	100%

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 8 percent of Even Start families lived in rural communities of the northeast region.

Since more projects are in the South than in any other region, it is not surprising that nearly half of all Even Start families (46 percent) are also in the South, particularly in rural areas of the South. The remaining 54 percent of families are distributed almost evenly (18-19 percent each) across the other three regions. At least 42 percent of Even Start families live in rural communities and 37 percent or more families live in urban areas. The percentages of urban and rural families are somewhat higher since the projects in the "mixed" communities include urban and rural families.

What Non-Even Start Services Are Available in the Communities?

The project directors were asked to describe the availability of educational programs, aside from Even Start services, for low-income families in their communities. As shown on Exhibit 4.4, the types of services that Even Start projects offer are available through other programs in many of the projects' local communities. Three notable exceptions are other family-centered literacy programs, early childhood programs for infants and toddlers, and parenting education. These types of programs are locally available for only 20, 26, and 45 percent of Even Start projects, respectively. For about 40 percent of the projects, Even Start is the sole source of English as a second language training in their local communities.

Conversely, 87 percent of Even Start projects reported that other adult secondary education and/or GED programs are available in their communities. Seventy-nine percent of projects reported that adult basic education classes and early childhood education for 3- and 4-year olds are available through other providers in their communities.

Exhibit 4.4. Percent of Projects Reporting Availability of Non-Even Start Educational Services in Their Communities (1994-95)

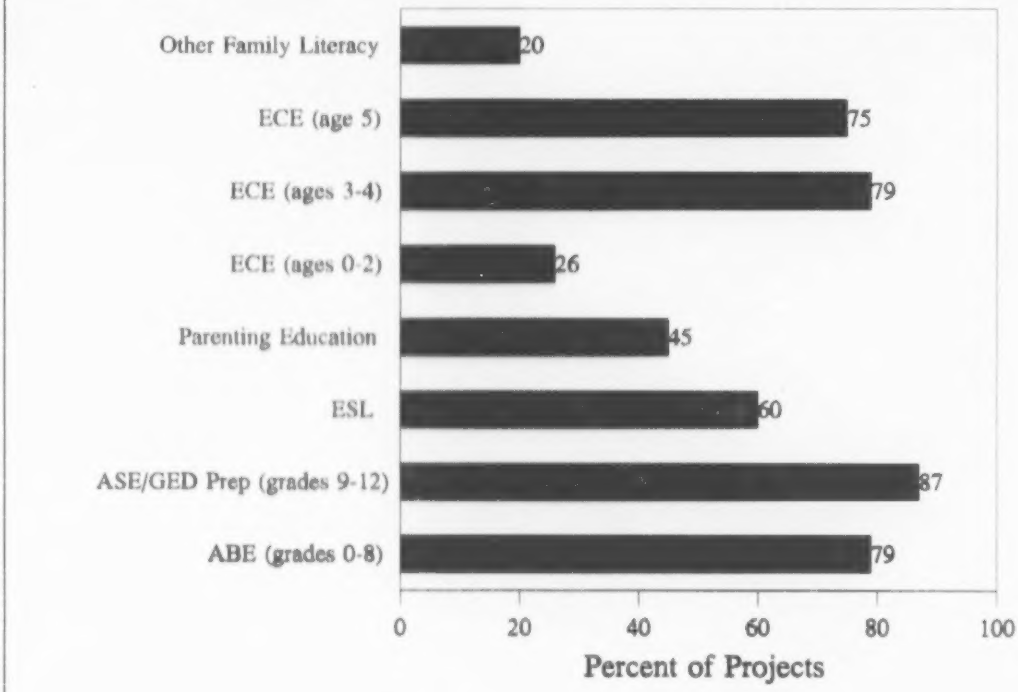


Exhibit reads: 20 percent of Even Start projects reported in 1994-95 that family literacy programs other than Even Start were available in their communities.

77

How Are Families Recruited and Screened?

To be eligible to receive Even Start services, a family must have at least one parent who qualifies for adult education under the Adult Education Act and have at least one child birth through age seven. Within this general parameter, Even Start projects develop specific approaches for recruiting and screening families to participate in their programs.

Criteria for Targeted Recruitment

The Even Start statute requires local projects to serve those eligible participants *most in need* of Even Start services as indicated by high levels of poverty, illiteracy, and other need-related factors. Projects may choose to serve particular groups within the eligible participant pool, such as families with at least one parent who did not complete high school.

As Exhibit 4.5 displays, just over one half of the project sites (53 percent) used additional recruitment criteria in targeting specific families. The remaining 47 percent of project sites primarily relied on the legislative eligibility criteria to recruit eligible families.

Eighty-six percent of the 277 project sites that reported using additional recruitment criteria targeted families where at least one parent had not completed high school. Seventy-four percent targeted families where the child was aged 3 through 5 years. Fewer sites (56 percent) reported targeting families with infants or toddlers from birth through 2 years.

Between 56 and 57 percent of the project sites that applied additional recruitment criteria cited other family and parental factors, such as: families having recently immigrated or having limited English proficiency; families with a single parent; families with income below a specified level; or families that reside in a specific housing development or other neighborhood with a Title I attendance area. Forty percent of these project sites sought out families where a parent was already enrolled in adult education classes through a collaborating agency.

Exhibit 4.5.

Criteria for Targeting Services to a Segment of the Eligible Population (1994-95)

	Number of Project Sites[a]	Percent of Project Sites
Sites that did not target special group	277	53%
Sites that targeted certain groups	248	47%

Special Groups of Eligible Families Targeted	Number of Project Sites	Percent of Targeting Project Sites[b]
Parent did not complete high school	239	86%
Child is age 3 through 5	204	74%
Recent immigrant or limited English proficiency	158	57%
Single parent	157	57%
Family income below a specified level	156	56%
Child is infant or toddler (age 0 through 2)	156	56%
Family resides in specific housing development or other neighborhood within Title I attendance area	155	56%
Child is already enrolled in early childhood education through a collaborating agency	126	46%
Teen parent	122	44%
Parent is already enrolled in adult education through a collaborating agency	111	40%

Note:[a] The percentages are based on the 567 project sites operated by the 476 projects included in evaluation analyses.

[b] The percentages of the project sites targeting special groups of eligible families are based on 277 project sites that used additional criteria in recruiting families.

Exhibit reads: Among 1994-95 Even Start project sites that used additional criteria for recruiting families, 86 percent targeted families with parents who had not completed high school.

It is noteworthy that projects targeting families with teenage parents increased from 89 sites in 1994 to 122 sites in 1995. One of the legislative changes that became effective in July 1995 with the reauthorization of the Even Start program was the extension of eligibility to teenage parents who are still within the compulsory education age of the state.

In addition to the ten criteria listed, 110 Even Start projects imposed additional criteria when recruiting prospective families. Twelve project sites described the following criteria:

- Families with instances of child abuse or neglect (5 sites);
- Families in which family members have substance abuse problems (3 sites);
- Families that have turbulent home environments marked by general instability (2 sites);
- Families in which family members have mental illness (1 site); and
- Families with a parent who is incarcerated (1 site).

Eleven project sites targeted families where the child had a diagnosed disability, developmental delay, or other special needs. Eight project sites preferred to recruit families through referrals from other social service agencies or the legal system. Projects that were awarded their Even Start grants under the program's special "set-asides" for Migrants and Native Americans imposed additional eligibility criteria that pertained to adults' seasonal employment status and/or to the ethnicity of the target adult or child(ren).

Recruitment Strategies

Responses to several other evaluation questions suggest that recruiting families was not a major problem for the vast majority of Even Start projects. As of October 1994, 34 percent of projects had a list of families waiting to enroll in Even Start. Projects with waiting lists had an average of 22 families waiting to enroll in October. This figure is an approximation since many projects may not maintain monthly records of the number of families on the waiting lists.

A set of items that addressed projects' specific recruitment strategies may shed additional light on this issue. As shown in Exhibit 4.6, the most commonly used strategy for contacting families was by "word of mouth," used "a great deal" by 68 percent of projects and used at least "some" by another 27 percent. Referrals by collaborating agencies were "used a great deal" by 62 percent of projects (see also Exhibit 4.7). Fifty-four percent of projects made use of public school referrals "a great deal," followed by posters or flyers (52 percent).

Relatively few projects, 17 percent, relied heavily on targeted mailings or the mass media to attract potential candidates to Even Start. Presumably the local pool of eligible families was sufficient, rendering these more costly, time-consuming measures unnecessary. Likewise, a broadcast radio announcement may be difficult for an adult with limited proficiency in English to understand. Instead, other face-to-face strategies such as home visits and "walking the neighborhood," used at least "some" by 77 percent and 52 percent of projects, respectively, may result in higher enrollments.

Exhibit 4.6.

Percent of Project Sites Using Special Recruitment Strategies (1994-95)

Recruitment Strategy	Not Used	Used Little	Used Some	Used a Great Deal
Public school referrals (e.g., Title I)	4%	11%	31%	54%
Referrals by Head Start or other preschool program	6%	15%	37%	42%
Referrals by community or governmental agencies	4%	8%	36%	52%
Walking the neighborhood	27%	21%	30%	22%
Home visits	10%	13%	32%	45%
Telephone contact	7%	18%	38%	36%
Word of mouth	1%	4%	27%	68%
Targeted mailings	36%	20%	27%	17%
Mass media	19%	23%	41%	17%
Posters or flyers	4%	10%	34%	52%
Collaborating agencies	3%	3%	33%	62%
Presentations or visits to community agencies	4%	10%	48%	38%
Other	37%	6%	28%	29%

Note: The percentages are based on the 522 project sites operated by the 476 projects included in evaluation analyses.

Exhibit reads: 54 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites used public school referrals a great deal in recruiting families.

In addition, as many as 63 percent of Even Start projects made at least a "little" use of recruitment strategies other than the twelve already listed. Examples of alternative recruitment strategies that projects reported included:

- Booths set up at state fairs, local 4-H fairs, health fairs, and other similar events (9 project sites);
- Presentations by Even Start staff at PTA meetings and parent open houses (5 project sites);
- Ads in church bulletins (5 project sites);
- Video about the Even Start program (2 project sites);
- Printed match books placed in bars (1 project site); and
- Tee shirts printed with the Even Start project logo (1 project site).

Exhibit 4.7. Percent of Project Sites Using Special Recruitment Strategies "a Great Deal" (1994-95)

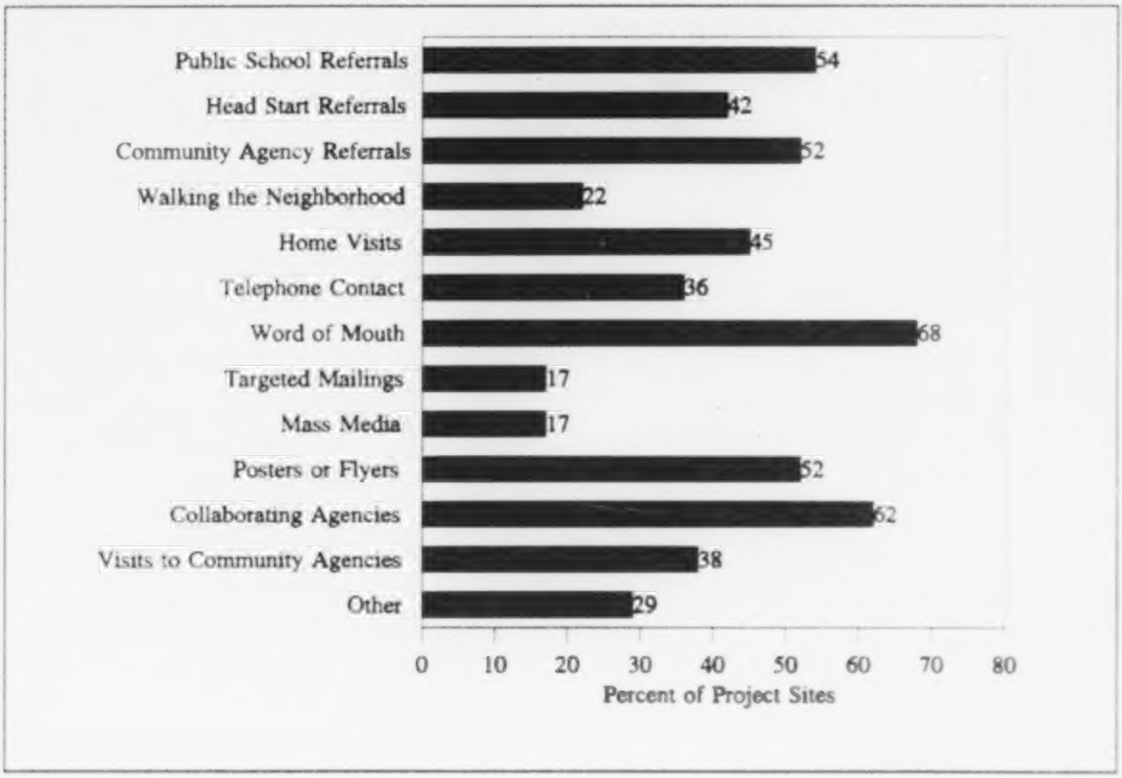


Exhibit reads: 54 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites used public school referrals "a great deal" for recruiting families.

Screening Procedures

Before applicant families are officially enrolled in the Even Start program, projects undertake various methods to screen them. Nearly all project sites (93 percent) reported that they took steps to verify that candidate families met the basic eligibility criteria mandated by Even Start. Eighty-five percent of project sites used this method of screening families "a great deal" (see Exhibit 4.8).

The second most commonly used screening procedure was to assess the basic skills of adults, used "a great deal" by 74 percent of project sites and "used some" by another 18 percent of project sites. As well as determining participant need, this procedure verifies the legal eligibility criterion that requires a family to have at least one adult who qualifies for the educational services provision of the Adult Education Act. Sixty-six percent of project sites relied on conducting an orientation as a first step in screening potential applicants, and another 20 percent of project sites reported using this method some of the time.

Exhibit 4.8. Percent of Project Sites, by Formal Steps Used "a Great Deal" in Screening Potential Participants (1994-95)

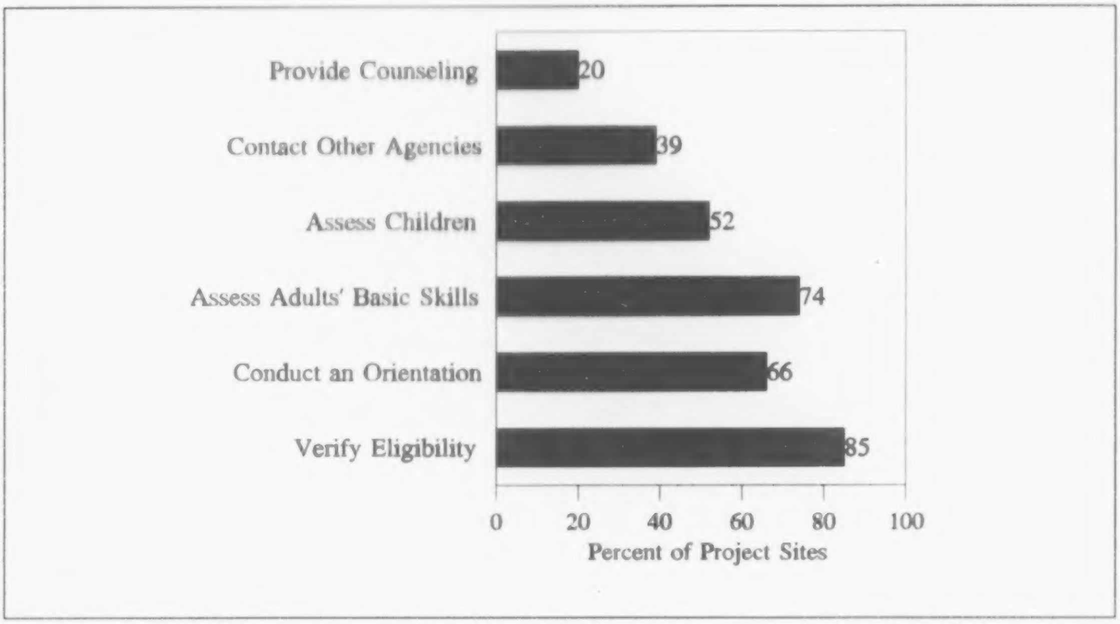


Exhibit reads: Counseling was used "a great deal" as a screening procedure by 20 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites.

Fifty-two percent of project sites assessed the language development or school readiness of the target child as a primary screening measure. Another 22 percent of sites conducted such assessment "some" of the time.

One explanation for the greater emphasis on screening adults rather than children may be a practical one. Projects can rely on children's chronological age to place them into educational levels. Since there is no such fall-back criterion for adults, it may be necessary to screen adults' baseline skill levels prior to placement. Further, projects may reason that if a family meets other participation criteria, such as having a parent in need of adult education, both the adults and children are likely to benefit from early childhood education and parenting education regardless of whether the child tests at or below his or her age level.

Finally, it should be noted that the percentages reported in Exhibit 4.8 for procedures "used a great deal" are virtually identical to those reported by projects for the *1994 Interim Report*, often varying by only 1 or 2 percentage points.

What Are the Basic Designs of Educational Programs?

In this section, we examine the following salient design features of Even Start projects:

- Models of educational programs that influenced the design of local Even Start projects;

- Characteristics of Even Start curricula that are locally developed versus commercially acquired, individualized versus standardized, and learner selected versus instructor selected;

- Characteristics of Even Start adult education programs; and

- Characteristics of Even Start parenting education programs.

Educational Models Used by Local Project

Even Start projects have the flexibility and responsibility to tailor their delivery of the three core educational components in ways that best serve the needs of their participating families. Even Start is intended to serve as a vehicle for pulling together already available models. To determine what sources were used as models to design local programs, project directors were provided with a list of 16 programs and educational models and asked to select all those that were "very influential" in the design of their projects. Exhibit 4.9 displays the percentages of project sites that selected each source of influence.

Over half of the project sites (54 percent) developed their own local model. In many of these cases, projects utilized or adapted the other models listed in the exhibit. Of the models listed, the Kenan Trust Family Literacy model was the most popular, implemented by 51 percent of project sites. This was followed closely by the High/Scope curriculum, which was a guiding influence for 48 percent of sites. Forty percent of project sites implemented the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program, followed by 34 percent whose designs derived from Head Start.

In addition, 186 project sites, or 33 percent of the responding sites, selected the "other" response and provided written descriptions of additional program designs. These designs included a proliferation of models and programs designed for children, adults, and/or whole families, many of which were various combinations of the 16 sources listed in Exhibit 4.9. Additional sources that were cited by at least four project sites each included:

- Designs adapted from other Even Start projects (10 project sites);
- Programs validated by the National Center for Family Literacy, which is the Kenan Trust Family Literacy model (7 project sites);
- The (Bavolek) Nurturing Program (7 project sites);
- Cornell University's Family Empowerment Model (6 project sites);
- Minnesota Early Childhood Family Education program (5 project sites);
- Megaskills (5 project sites);
- Effective Parenting Instruction for Children (EPIC) (5 project sites);

- MotherRead and FatherRead (5 project sites);
- Positive Indian Parenting (4 project sites); and
- Montessori Model (4 project sites).

Exhibit 4.9. Percent of Project Sites, by "Very Influential" Sources for the Project Design (1994-95)

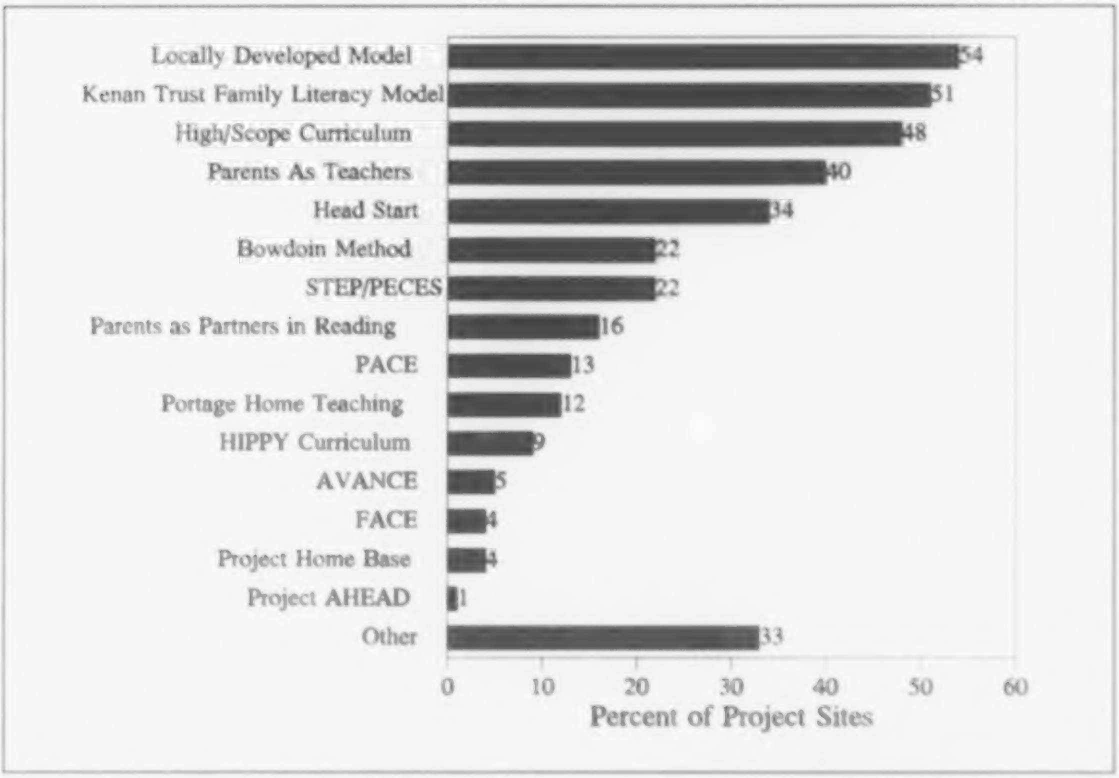


Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, Kenan Trust Family Literacy Model was very influential in the program design of 51 percent of Even Start project sites.

Characteristics of Even Start Curricula

Project directors were asked to report whether the main components of their projects' curriculum were commercially acquired (e.g., developed and distributed by sources external to projects), developed within individual Even Start projects, or both. As shown in Exhibit 4.10, 55 percent of project sites acquired their adult secondary education or GED preparation curricula from other sources; only 17 percent of sites developed this in-house. The blueprint for adult basic education was a combination of commercially acquired and "both" (42 percent and 35 percent, respectively), with only 23 percent of project sites venturing to develop this on their own. Parenting education garnered the largest percentage of "mostly locally developed" responses (38 percent), although this percentage represents a drop of about 4 percentage points from 1993-94. Like parenting education, early childhood education tended to be an infusion of both locally developed and commercially acquired curricula.

Exhibit 4.10.

Main Source of Even Start Educational Curricula (1994-95)

Educational Area	Number of Sites Reporting	Mostly Locally Developed	Mostly Acquired	Both
Adult Basic Education	508	23%	42%	35%
Adult Secondary Education/GED Preparation	507	17%	55%	28%
English as a Second Language (ESL)	379	33%	29%	38%
Parenting Education	523	38%	20%	41%
Early Childhood Education	521	33%	29%	38%

Note: The percentages are based on the number of project sites reported by the 476 projects included in evaluation analyses.
Exhibit reads: 23 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites used mostly locally developed design and materials for their adult basic education curricula.

Similarly, project directors were asked to place their instructional programs on a continuum, from instruction that was "mostly individualized" to "mostly standardized." Exhibit 4.11 shows that, across the board, projects favored mostly individualized instruction, particularly for Adult Basic Education (73 percent). Parenting education tended to be either "mostly individualized" (55 percent) or "both" (36 percent).

Exhibit 4.11.

Nature of Even Start Instruction: Individualized versus Standardized (1994-95)

Educational Area	Number of Sites Reporting	Mostly Individualized	Mostly Standardized	Both
Adult Basic Education	505	73%	5%	22%
Adult Secondary Education/GED Preparation	503	62%	14%	25%
English as a Second Language	368	61%	7%	32%
Parenting Education	523	55%	9%	36%
Early Childhood Education	521	61%	7%	32%

Note: The percentages are based on the number of project sites reported by the 476 projects included in evaluation analyses.
Exhibit reads: 73 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites used mostly individualized instruction in their adult basic education programs.

Project directors also rated their projects' instructional curricula in terms of the extent to which activities involved learners working mostly in a group versus individuals working mostly alone. As Exhibit 4.12 indicates, parenting education involved mostly group activities for 60 percent of projects; only 6 percent of projects had parents working independently.

Exhibit 4.12.

Nature of Even Start Instruction: Group-Focused versus Individual-Focused (1994-95)

Educational Area	Number of Sites Reporting	Mostly Group Activities	Mostly Working Alone	Both
Adult Basic Education	502	13%	37%	51%
Adult Secondary Education/GED Preparation	505	11%	41%	48%
English as a Second Language	367	40%	20%	40%
Parenting Education	521	60%	6%	34%
Early Childhood Education	517	35%	9%	56%

Note: The percentages are based on the number of project sites reported by the 476 projects included in evaluation analyses.
Exhibit reads: 13 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites used mostly group activities in their adult basic education programs.

For early childhood education, 56 percent of projects utilized both group and individual instruction, although few projects (9 percent) relied exclusively on the child working independently on activities. Having students work alone and at their own pace seemed to be most prevalent for adult secondary education or GED preparation (41 percent) and for adult basic education (37 percent). English as a second language instruction was evenly divided between having students receive instruction in-group or both in-group and individually (40 percent and 40 percent, respectively), and only 20 percent of projects had ESL students "mostly working alone."

Likewise, project directors rated their instructional programs according to the extent that they were selected by students or by instructors. As shown in Exhibit 4.13, few projects reported that instructional activities were mostly learner selected, with the exception of parenting education for which 31 percent of project sites favored learner selection, and only 20 percent favored instructor selection.

Exhibit 4.13.

Nature of Even Start Instruction: Learner- versus Instructor-Selected Activities (1994-95)

Educational Area	Number of Sites Reporting	Mostly Learner Selected	Mostly Instructor Selected	Both
Adult Basic Education	502	15%	43%	42%
Adult Secondary Education/GED Preparation	505	15%	43%	43%
English as a Second Language	368	15%	45%	41%
Parenting Education	522	31%	20%	49%
Early Childhood Education	518	23%	35%	43%

Note: The percentages are based on the number of project sites reported by the 476 projects included in evaluation analyses.
Exhibit reads: 15 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites used mostly learner-selected instructional activities in their adult basic education programs.

Exhibit 4.14 summarizes Even Start adult basic education services in terms of: (1) the amount of functional literacy that was incorporated in the primary instructional approach; and (2) the context in which instruction was presented.

The majority of project sites included at least "some" functional literacy in their adult basic education instruction (see upper half of Exhibit 4.14). This was particularly the case for the intermediate level ABE and the adult secondary/GED classes, for which about three-quarters of the reporting projects incorporated "some" or "mostly" functional literacy (78 percent and 74 percent, respectively).

ESL classes included the least amount of functional literacy, perhaps because instructions in basic skills are emphasized more than functional literacy in these classes. Forty-five percent of project sites did not respond to this item, indicating that the question was inapplicable to many projects whose participants need little ESL training. Projects' responses to their primary instructional approach resulted in percentages that were nearly identical to those reported in the Interim Report for 1994.

We also asked project directors to describe their adult basic education services in terms of three broad categories of instructional contexts: Life Skills; Vocational; and Parenting. Because projects could frame instruction in more than one way within each programmatic component, project directors were asked to select all applicable contexts.

Exhibit 4.14.

Characteristics of Adult Basic Education Services (1994-95)

	Adult Education Components			
Primary Instructional Approach	**Beginning ABE (0-4)**	**Intermediate ABE (5-8)**	**ASE/GED (9-12)**	**ESL**
Mostly functional literacy	27%	26%	56%	24%
Some functional literacy	16%	52%	18%	17%
Little or no functional literacy	35%	2%	8%	15%
Project sites not reporting	23%	19%	18%	45%
Instructional Context	**Beginning ABE (0-4)**	**Intermediate ABE (5-8)**	**ASE/GED (9-12)**	**ESL**
Life Skills	67%	70%	67%	52%
Vocational	35%	45%	62%	34%
Parenting	63%	68%	67%	48%

Note: The percentages for this table are based on 567 project sites operated by the 476 projects included in the evaluation.

Exhibit reads: 27 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites used mostly functional literacy materials in the beginning ABE programs. 67 percent of project sites incorporated life skills training in the beginning ABE programs.

Many Even Start projects employed a combination of instructional contexts across the four education levels (lower half of Exhibit 4.14). In general, Life Skills and Parenting were commonly used as contexts for adult education instruction. Less than half of the Even Start project sites presented adult education within a Vocational context, with the exception of adult secondary education and GED classes in which 62 percent did so. An explanation may be that once students progress to the high school level, Even Start adult education instructors gear instruction toward inculcating job skills in order to prepare students to enter the workforce. Hence, the percentage of projects in the ASE/GED programs that contextualized instruction vocationally approximated the percentage of projects that advanced life skills and parenting skills (62 and 67 percent, respectively).

Intensity of Educational Services

A crucial set of items pertained to the number of scheduled hours for the typical Even Start participant. To ascertain the intensity of the educational services provided by Even Start projects, we asked project directors to report the following: (1) scheduled times per month; (2) hours per month; (3) number of months per year; and (4) hours per month that services are provided in participants' homes. This was a complex set of questions since many educational activities are intended to serve more than one purpose. For example, as illustrated by the preceding section on instructional contexts for adult education, adult education classes could also serve the objectives of parenting education. The projects were instructed to "double-count" the hours of instruction that serve multiple purposes. Thus, if a project provides families 2 hours per month of parent-child activities during home visits, those 2 hours would count toward both parenting education and early childhood education.

For the adult education component, the scheduled hours are, on average, 11 to 12 times per month, 10 months out of the year (see Exhibit 4.15). These numbers translate to about 3 times per week, most likely during the non-summer months.

For the average number of hours of adult education instruction per month, ESL instruction has the lowest reported average (31 hours) and adult secondary education or GED preparation the highest (36 hours). These figures translate to between 8 and 9 hours per week that the typical Even Start adult student is expected to spend receiving instruction. A portion of this time, about 4 hours per month, is scheduled to be spent in families' homes as part of the home-based education services component. When interpreting these data, it is important to note the wide range of responses. For example, the number of hours of adult education that projects offer each month range from only 1 hour to 80 hours or more.

When comparing these data to those submitted for 1993-94, two subtle but important differences become apparent. The average adult education hours that projects offer increased by about 1 hour per month since the previous year. Secondly, the time allotted per month to adult education that was home based rose from between 3.5 and 3.8 hours (in 1993-94) to 4.2 and 4.4 hours (in 1994-95).

As was the case in 1993-94, parents were offered considerably less time in parenting education than in adult education. Parenting education was offered an average of 7 to 8 times per month, depending upon whether activities were for parents alone or for parents and children together. Each of the two types of parenting education activities averaged about 10 hours per month and were held 10 months out of the year. These averages amount to 99 hours per year for activities for parents alone and 96 hours for parenting activities for parents and children together, less than one-third of the hours per year that projects devoted to adult education (which ranged from 311 hours to 367 hours annually). Finally, approximately 3 hours out of the 7 to 8 hours in each type of parenting education activity were intended to occur in participants' homes.

Once again, the average number of scheduled hours increased by about 1 hour since the previous year. Specifically, parenting activities offered for the parent alone increased from an average of 9 hours to 10 hours per month, and activities for parents and children together increased by 2 hours, from 8 hours to 10 hours on average.

Exhibit 4.15.

Intensity of Services Offered in Three Core Components (Average Across Reporting Project Sites, 1994-95)

Educational Area	Percent of Sites Reporting	Times Per Month	Hours per Month	Duration of Instruction in Months	Hours per Month of Home-Based Services	Hours per Year per Participant
Adult Education						
Beginning ABE (0-4)	72%	**11 times** (1-20)	**34 hours** (1-80)	**10 months** (1-12)	**4.3 hours** (1-15)	**341 hours** (10-960)
Intermediate ABE (5-8)	74%	**12** (1-20)	**34** (2-80)	**10** (1-12)	**4.2** (1-12)	**351** (20-960)
ASE/GED Preparation (9-12)	81%	**12** (2-20)	**36** (2-80)	**10** (1-12)	**4.4** (1-12)	**367** (20-960)
ESL	53%	**11** (1-20)	**31** (1-80)	**10** (1-12)	**4.2** (1-15)	**311** (4-880)
Parenting Education						
Parent alone	82%	**7** (1-16)	**10** (1-28)	**10** (1-12)	**2.9** (1-8)	**99** (2-264)
Parent and child together	84%	**8** (1-20)	**10** (1-22)	**10** (1-12)	**3.1** (1-10)	**96** (2-240)
Early Childhood Education						
Under age 3	71%	**10** (1-20)	**35** (1-109)	**10** (2-12)	**3.0** (1-8)	**350** (4-1080)
Age 3 and 4	82%	**13** (1-22)	**49** (1-120)	**10** (1-12)	**3.2** (1-8)	**489** (4-1200)
Age 5	71%	**14** (1-22)	**53** (1-140)	**10** (1-12)	**2.9** (1-6)	**519** (1-1400)
Age 6 and 7	56%	**12** (1-23)	**59** (1-144)	**10** (1-12)	**2.9** (1-6)	**557** (1-1440)

Note: The percentages are based on the 567 project sites operated by the 476 projects included in evaluation analyses. The range of responses from 95 percent of the sites reporting is indicated in parentheses.
Exhibit reads: On average in 1994-95, beginning ABE sessions were offered 11 times per month, 34 hours per month, 10 months of the year, totalling 341 hours per year. On average 4.3 hours of beginning ABE activities were conducted in participants' homes. Across 95 percent of the reporting sites, the hours offered annually for beginning ABE programs was 10 to 960.

The scheduled hours for early childhood education (bottom portion of Exhibit 4.15) include activities that Even Start projects provide either directly or by collaboration with other agencies, excluding the hours spent in compulsory schooling. On average, educational services were offered to infants and toddlers up to 3 years of age 35 hours per month, 10 times per month, and 350 hours per year. The average scheduled hours for 3- and 4-year-olds were 49 hours per month, 13 times per month, 489 hours per year.

Five-year-olds were the age group served most frequently, an average of 14 times per month, 53 hours per month, 519 hours per year. The hours offered for 6- to 7-year-olds averaged 12 times per month, 59 hours per month, 557 hours per year. However, only 56 percent of project sites responded for this eldest age group; these children are likely to be in compulsory schooling and to no longer be receiving Even Start core services.

These means represent a departure from the 1993-94 evaluation data, in which the 3- and 4-year olds emerged as the age group most intensely served (with 39 hours per month). However, it is important to emphasize that, once again, projects appeared to have increased the intensity of their services across the board. Last year, the average hours per month for early childhood education ranged from 25 to 39 hours. For 1994-95, the means were considerably higher, ranging from 35 to 59 hours per month. Finally, Even Start educational services were provided to children for an average of 10 months out of the year regardless of their age group, and all age groups received about 3 hours per month of home-based instruction.

Contents of Parenting Education

Even Start projects delivered a wide range of services to help parents learn about their children's development. Parenting activities included those that were primarily focused on the child (Child-Focused), those that were primarily focused on parents (Parent-Focused), and services that focused specifically on the parent-child literacy activities.

Child-Focused

Ninety percent of Even Start project sites provide parents with information about child development (see Exhibits 4.16 and 4.17). Most often this takes the form of written materials that inform parents about what they should expect as their children mature. Eighty-nine percent of sites give parents specific instructions on how to develop their child's language, thinking, and social skills, and 88 percent of sites teach most families how to provide for their child's safety and well-being. Developing motor skills and positive techniques for managing children's behavior were instructional topics covered by 81 percent of project sites. Fifty-two percent of project sites taught parents how to use television and family outings as vehicles for instruction; 51 percent gave parents pointers on how to help with homework.

Parent-Focused

Another important aspect of parenting education is to strengthen the parents' personal skills and capabilities; in essence, to empower them to be self-reliant in all aspects of their lives. Self-esteem was the most common topic: 97 percent of projects touched on self-esteem with at least "some" of their families, and, of these, 93 percent did so with most of their families. Likewise, 97 percent of projects taught life skills, awareness of available community and social services, and basic health and nutrition to at least some of their families. Sixty-six percent of projects worked on making parents in most families aware of the vocational and educational options open to them; an additional 28 percent of projects introduced this topic area to some of their Even Start families (see Exhibit 4.16).

Exhibit 4.16.

Extent of Parenting Education Activities Offered
(Percentages of Project Sites, 1994-95)

Parenting Education Activities	Most Families	Some Families	Few Families	Not Taught
Child Focused:				
Child development	90%	8%	2%	1%
Child's language & thinking skills	89%	9%	2%	1%
Child's motor skills	81%	15%	3%	2%
Child's social skills	89%	9%	2%	<1%
Assisting with homework	51%	33%	12%	4%
Using TV or outings for instruction	52%	27%	13%	8%
Behavior management	81%	16%	2%	1%
School routines	66%	26%	7%	2%
Child's safety and well-being	88%	9%	2%	1%
Parent-Focused:				
Parent self-esteem	93%	4%	2%	<1%
Parent life skills	85%	12%	3%	<1%
Awareness of community and social service	83%	14%	3%	0%
Awareness of vocational and educational opportunities	66%	28%	5%	1%
Health and nutrition	82%	15%	2%	1%
Parent-Child Literacy:	93%	6%	1%	<1%

Note: The percentages for this table are based on the number of 1994-95 project sites reporting. About 7 percent of the total of 567 project sites did not provide information on this question.
Exhibit reads: 90 percent of 1994-95 project sites reporting conducted parenting education activities focusing on child development issues with most of their families.

Exhibit 4.17. Percent of Project Sites Providing Various Types of Parenting Education Activities to "Most Families" (1994-95)

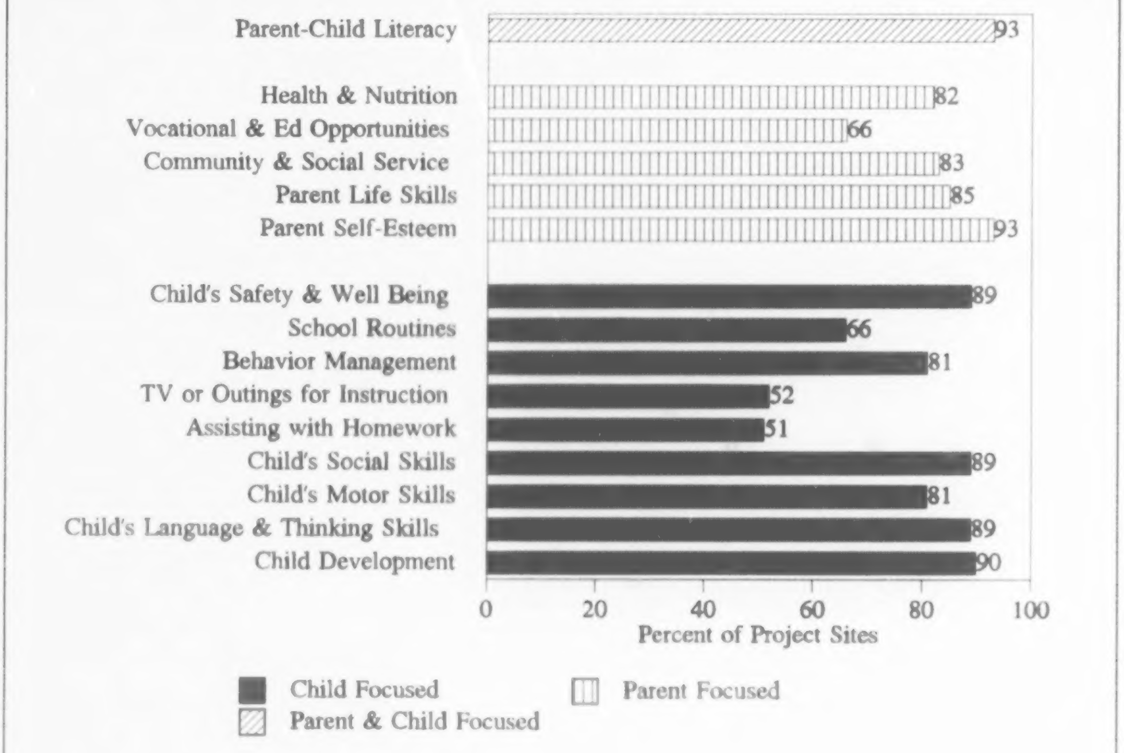


Exhibit reads: 93 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites provided parent-child literacy activities to most families in parenting education program.

Parent-Child Literacy

In accordance with the Even Start model as a *family* literacy program, literacy for both parents and children was an area of major emphasis in the vast majority of Even Start projects: 99 percent of projects provided this type of activity to at least some of their families, and 93 percent did so to most of their families (see Exhibits 4.16 and 4.17).

Types of Parent-Child Joint Activities

To determine the intensity of services provided to parents and their children together, project directors were asked to provide the hours per month that a typical Even Start family spends in structured parent-child joint activities in each of three settings: (1) home visits; (2) center or classroom; and (3) field trips, meals, or other social functions.

Exhibit 4.18.

Hours Per Month a "Typical Family" Spends in Parent-Child Joint Activities, by Setting (1994-95)

Settings	Number of Project Sites Reporting	Average Hours Per Month	Range of Hours Reported
Home visits	469	2.8	1-20
Center or classroom	469	7.5	1-70
Field trips, meals, or social functions	464	4.4	1-30

Note: The averages are based on the number of project sites responding to these questions, not the total of 567 project sites included in the evaluation.
Exhibit reads: A typical 1994-95 Even Start family spent 2.8 hours per month in parent-child joint activities during home visits, 7.5 hours in a center or classroom setting, and 4.4 hours during special events.

As displayed by Exhibit 4.18, on average, projects offered monthly about 3 hours of joint parent-child activities in the home, about seven and one half hours in the center or classroom, and almost four and one half hours in extracurricular activities. While the range of estimates reported was highly variable, particularly for the center or classroom setting, the means reported in Exhibit 4.18 are virtually identical to project directors' estimates for 1993-94.

Exhibits 4.19 and 4.20 list the specific types of parent-child activities that projects offered to participants. Nearly all project sites offered the first five activities listed to at least some of their participants: 94 percent offered reading, storytelling, and pre-reading to most of their families; and 90 percent offered language development activities to most families. Although 93 percent of sites taught "Working with numbers" to at least some of their families, only 61 percent of these regarded this as a critical area to be taught to most families. Substantially fewer projects offered activities in which parents and children worked together to learn the alphabet and how to write (51 percent).

Opportunities for parents and children to engage in computer activities were offered to most families by only about one quarter of Even Start project sites (26 percent). Many projects have limited access to personal computers, which they often need to reserve for their office use and for use in adult education classes. Even fewer projects have access to portable laptop computers to take into participants' homes, where many of these parent and child activities are conducted.

In addition to literacy activities, 99 percent of projects focused parent-child activities on social development with at least some families; 89 percent offered social development activities to most of the families they served. Similarly, 97 percent offered activities designed to build independence, self-discipline, and self-help skills to at least some families; 80 percent of projects made these activities available to most families, suggesting that there is a high need among families for this type of education.

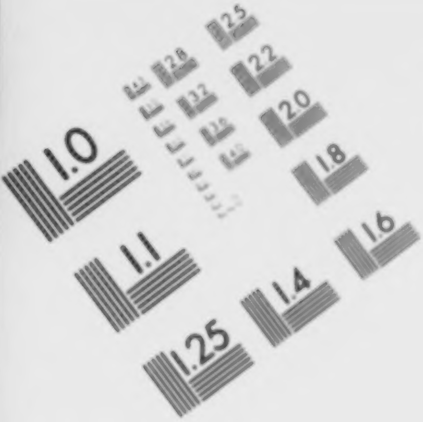
Exhibit 4.19.

Extent of Parent-Child Joint Activities Offered
(Percent of Project Sites, 1994-95)

Activity	Most Families	Some Families	Few Families	Not Taught
Language development	90%	9%	1%	<1%
Reading, storytelling, pre-reading	94%	5%	1%	1%
Working with letters and writing	51%	38%	7%	4%
Working with numbers	61%	32%	7%	1%
Early academic skills	78%	19%	3%	1%
Computer activities	26%	29%	14%	31%
Sensory stimulation	71%	23%	5%	1%
Arts and crafts	77%	17%	4%	2%
Gross motor activities	72%	23%	3%	2%
Social development	89%	10%	1%	<1%
Independence, self-discipline, self-help skills	80%	17%	2%	1%
Health and nutrition	79%	16%	4%	2%
Activities selected and led by child	64%	26%	7%	2%

Note: The percentages for this table are based on the number of project sites reporting. About 7 percent of the total of 567 project sites did not provide information on this question.
Exhibit reads: 90 percent of 1994-95 project sites reporting conducted language development activities in their parent-child joint activities with most of their families.

Sensory stimulation, arts and crafts, gross motor activities, and health and nutrition were offered to most families by about three-quarters of projects. Finally, 64 percent of projects provided activities selected and led by the child to most of their families, and an additional 26 percent of projects made this available to some families.



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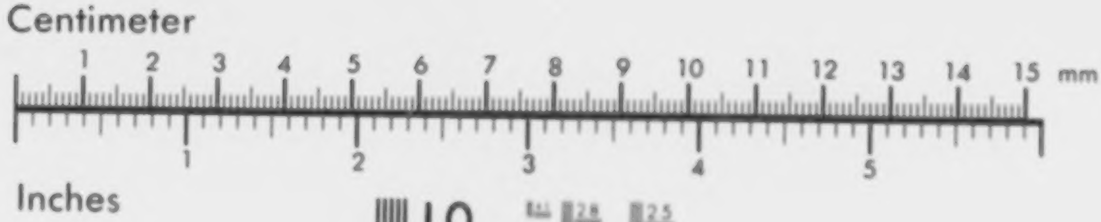
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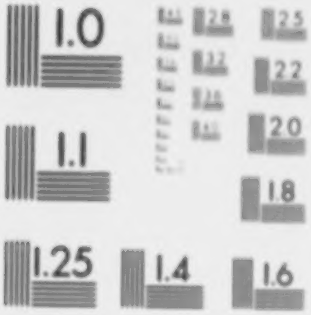
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Exhibit 4.20. Percent of Project Sites Offering Various Parent-Child Activities to "Most Families" (1994-95)

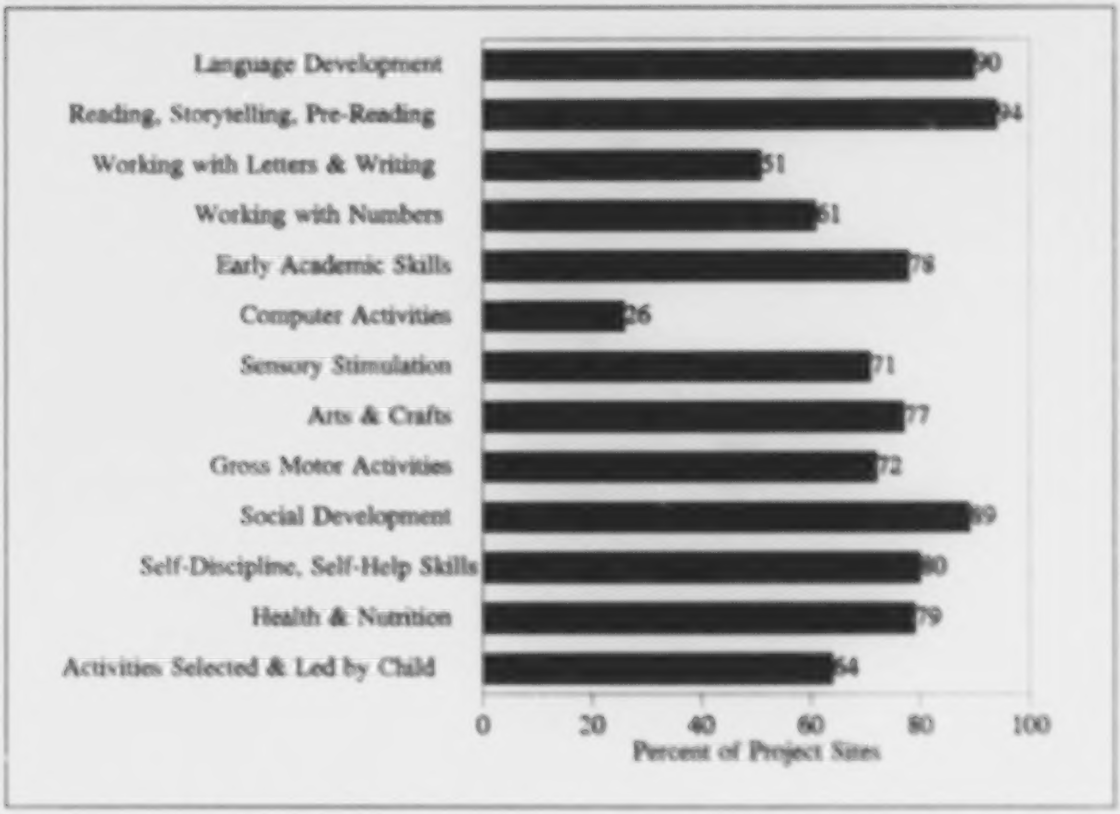

Exhibit reads: 90 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites provided language development activities to most families in parent-child joint activity sessions.

Flexibility in Program Scheduling

Flexibility in service provision is an important factor in projects' ability to enroll and retain families in Even Start. As Exhibit 4.21 shows, 89 percent of Even Start project sites reported that they provide or arrange for child care to enable participants to attend. Three quarters of projects provided both home-based and center-based instruction. However, as mentioned earlier, home-based instruction accounts for only 3 to 4 contact hours per month for each of the three core service areas, indicating that the majority of instruction still occurs in a centralized location (refer back to Exhibit 4.15). Over half of the project sites (53 percent) provide day and evening or weekend classes. Finally, about one quarter of project sites made other types of arrangements in order to accommodate participants' schedules and constraints.

Exhibit 4.21.

Flexibility in Scheduling of Even Start Services to Accommodate Adult Participants (1994-95)

Scheduling and/or Support Services	Number of Project Sites	Percent of Project Sites
Child care made available	469	89%
Home-based and center-based instruction	396	75%
Day and evening or weekend instruction	281	53%
Other	124	24%

Note: Percentages are based on the number of project sites reported by the 476 projects included in the evaluation analyses.
Exhibit reads: 89 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites provided child care services to assist parents to participate in Even Start activities.

How Are the Core Educational Programs Integrated?

A series of items paired each of the three core service areas--(1) Parenting Education and Adult Basic Education, (2) Parenting Education and Early Childhood Education, and (3) Adult Basic Education and Early Childhood Education--and asked project directors to rate the extent to which each pair of core services was integrated for their "typical family." Integration of services was operationalized as the frequency with which two core services were: (1) provided in the same setting (e.g., the same room or building); (2) taught by the same instructors; (3) used the same or parallel activities; and (4) planned or coordinated for parents and children together. Exhibits 4.22 and 4.23 display the results for each measure of service integration.

Overall, conducting parent-child joint activities was the most common approach to integration, followed by providing services in the same physical setting. Using the same instructors and modifying curricula to provide the same or parallel instructional activities appear to be significantly more challenging, although some projects managed to do so "always or usually." Typically instructors specialize in a particular area of education, such as early childhood education or adult education, but rarely in both. Hence, locating instructors who are qualified to teach both adults and children is a particularly difficult task, as these data demonstrate. Likewise, even if project staff have the expertise, very few projects have the resources to develop an integrated curricula entirely on their own. Indeed, the data on program designs presented earlier in this chapter indicated that most Even Start projects adopt all or parts of existing models in designing their Even Start program.

Parenting Education and Adult Basic Education

The most popular approaches used to integrate parenting education and adult basic education were to provide instruction in the same setting and/or through parent-child joint activities. Sixty-five percent of projects reported that they "always or usually" integrated parenting instruction and adult basic education in these ways. Conversely, only 41 percent achieved integration by using the same instructors "always or usually," and even fewer projects reported "always or usually" using the same or parallel activities to achieve parenting and adult education aims (37 percent).

Exhibit 4.22.

Level of Integration of Even Start Core Services (1994-95)

Nature of Integration	Parenting & Adult Basic Education			Parenting & Early Childhood Education			Adult & Early Childhood Education		
	Never	Some-times	Always/ Usually	Never	Some-times	Always/ Usually	Never	Some-times	Always/ Usually
Same setting	6%	29%	65%	5%	31%	64%	22%	33%	45%
Same instructors	15%	44%	41%	9%	43%	48%	39%	37%	24%
Same or parallel activities	6%	57%	37%	3%	47%	50%	12%	61%	27%
Joint activities	4%	32%	65%	2%	22%	76%	6%	36%	58%

Note: The percentages for this table are based on the number of project sites reporting. About 7 percent of the total 567 project sites did not provide information on this question.
Exhibit reads: 65 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites integrated parenting and adult basic education activities by conducting them in the same setting always or usually.

To further determine the extent to which parenting education and adult education are integrated, project directors also were asked to estimate the number of hours per month in which they combine parenting and adult education activities. It is important to understand when interpreting these data that the question referred to the number of hours specified in the project design and not to an actual log of participant contact hours.

Exhibit 4.23. Percent of Project Sites, by Nature of Integration of Even Start Core Services "Always/Usually" (1994-95)

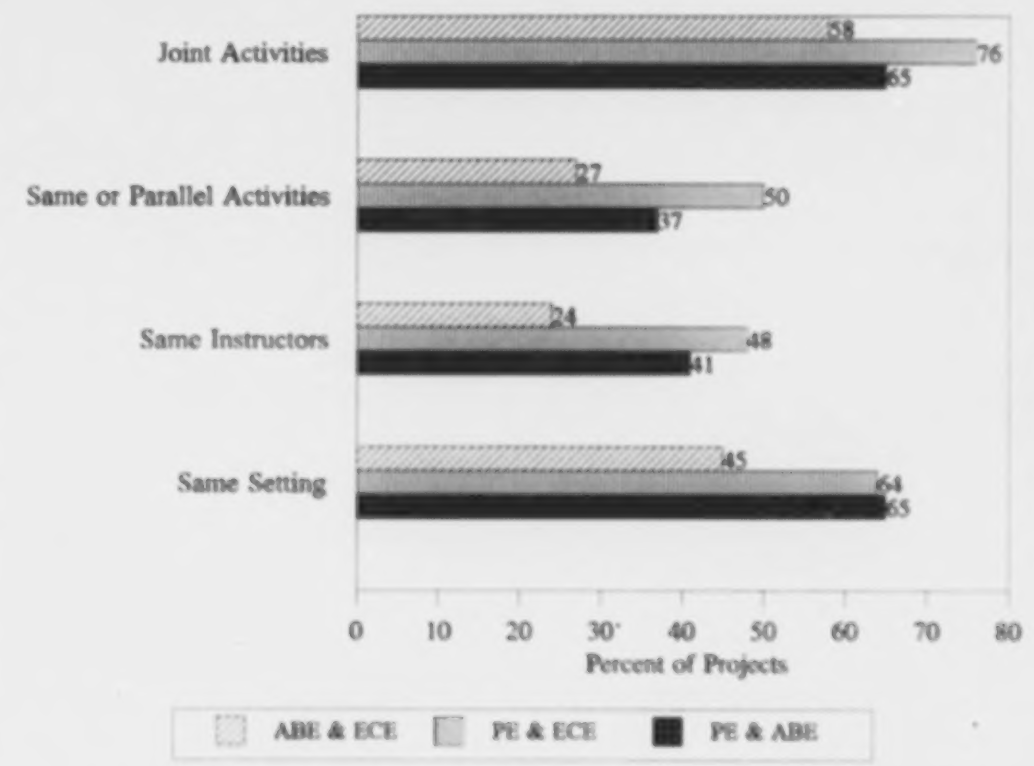

Exhibit reads: 65 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites integrated parenting and adult basic education activities by conducting them in the same setting always or usually.

As Exhibit 4.24 demonstrates, the average number of hours per month dedicated to meeting parenting objectives in the context of adult basic education was highly variable across project sites (refer to the column headed "Range of Hours Reported"). Specifically, project directors' responses ranged from a minimum of 1 hour per month to 154 hours. Both beginning adult education and adult secondary education were integrated with parenting education an average of 12 hours per month. For intermediate adult education and ESL classes, the average time devoted to integrated service delivery was closer to 11 hours per month. These means represent about an hour increase from the 10 to 11 hour monthly averages reported for 1993-94.

Exhibit 4.24.

Hours Per Month that Adult Education Is Combined With Parenting Education (1994-95)

Adult Education Components	Number of Project Sites Reporting	Average Hours Per Month	Range of Hours Reported
Beginning ABE (0-4)	382	11.6	1-154
Intermediate ABE (5-8)	398	11.2	1-108
ASE/GED preparation (9-12)	416	12.2	1-147
ESL	272	11.2	1-100

Note: The averages are based on the number of project sites responding to these questions, not the total of 567 project sites included in the evaluation.
Exhibit reads: On average, in 1994-95, activities that integrated adult education and parenting education were offered 11.6 hours per month.

Parenting and Early Childhood Education

Seventy-six percent of project sites used a joint activities approach "always or usually" to combine parenting education with early childhood education, followed by 64 percent that provided these classes in the same setting (see Exhibits 4.22 and 4.23). About half of Even Start sites assigned parallel activities or used the same instructional staff on a regular basis to integrate these two educational components.

Adult Education and Early Childhood Education

The most regularly used strategy to integrate adult and early childhood education was to have parents and children engage in joint activities (see Exhibits 4.22 and 4.23). This whole family approach toward integration was used "always or usually" by 58 percent of project sites. Forty-five percent of sites provided adult and early childhood education in the same setting either always or usually. This amounts to substantially fewer projects than those that used the same setting for parenting and adult education (65 percent) and for parenting and early childhood education (64 percent). Arguably, adult education and early childhood education may be the most difficult of the three service combinations to integrate, having to keep both parents and children engaged in their respective but separate lessons.

What Support Services Do Even Start Families Need?

Project directors were asked to rate participating families' level of needs for 14 categories of support services by indicating whether "all," "many," "few," or "none" of their project families were in need. Exhibits 4.25 and 4.26 display the percentages of projects responding to each category of support services.

Exhibit 4.25.

Percent of Project Sites, by Families' Need for Support Services (1994-95)

Support Services	All	Many	Few	None
Transportation	20%	58%	20%	2%
Child care	43%	43%	12%	2%
Meals	31%	34%	26%	10%
Nutrition assistance	26%	48%	23%	3%
Housing	6%	32%	53%	10%
Health care	20%	48%	29%	3%
Mental health	3%	26%	63%	8%
Employment assistance	13%	51%	34%	3%
Family support	29%	45%	24%	2%
Crisis intervention	6%	32%	55%	8%
Special care for person(s) with disabilities	1%	6%	70%	24%
Financial assistance	18%	47%	28%	8%
Translators or interpreters	4%	26%	30%	40%
Case management	25%	29%	37%	10%

Note: The percentages for this table are based on the number of project sites reporting. About 10 percent of the total of 567 project sites did not provide information on this question.
Exhibit reads: 20 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites reported that all of their families needed transportation services.

For interpretation purposes, it may be helpful to combine the percentages of projects' "all" and "many" ratings. Overall, child care emerges as the most prevalent need; 86 percent of project sites reported that at least "many" of their families had child care needs. Transportation services were needed by the majority of families in 78 percent of project sites, followed closely by nutrition assistance (74 percent). Health care was needed by "all" or "many" of the families being served by 68 percent of sites, and 65 percent reported that many or all families needed financial assistance and to have meals provided. Sixty-four percent of project sites reported having many or all families that needed help in finding employment. Other categories of needs, such as the need for language translators and for help in caring for a disabled family member, were less common.

In comparing the relative importance of participants' needs for support services, it is important to recognize that there is considerable overlap among many of these categories of needs. For example, a family's needs for child care and health care may stem from the financial difficulties they are experiencing.

Exhibit 4.26. Percent of Project Sites, by Families' Need for Support Services (All and Many Families) (1994-95)

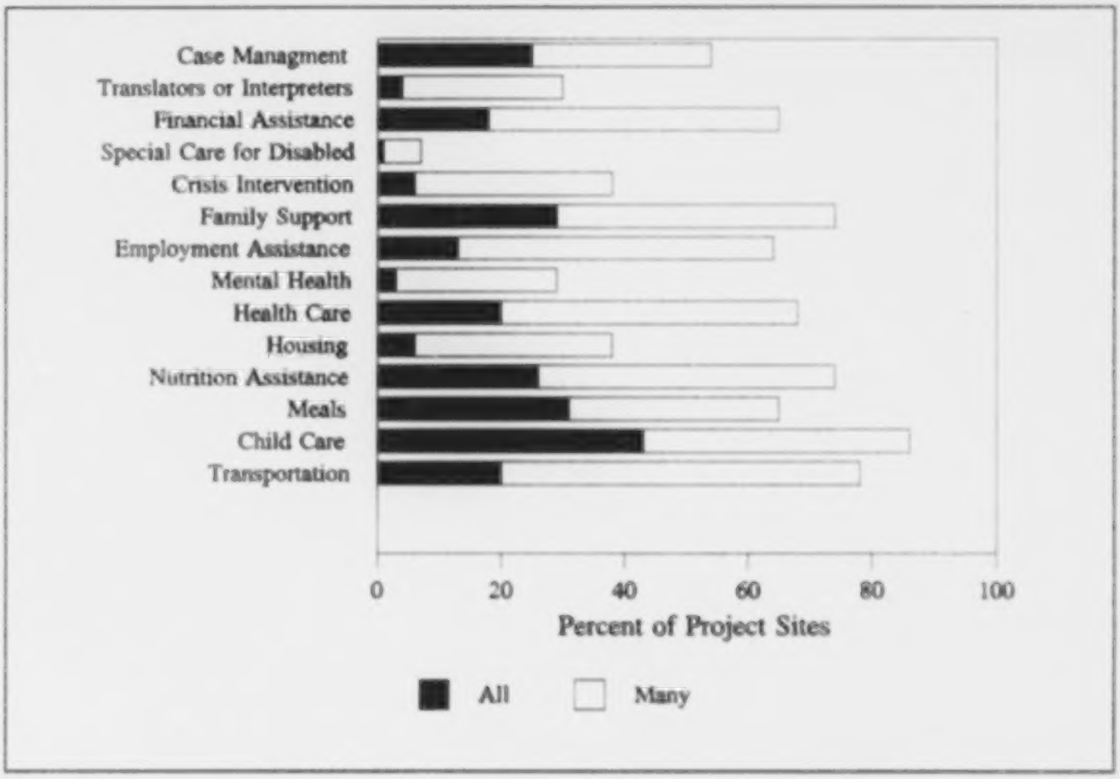

Exhibit reads: 20 percent of 1994-95 Even Start project sites reported that all of their families needed transportation services.

103

Chapter Five

To What Extent Did Even Start Families Participate in the Services Offered?

In the previous chapters, we reported that many Even Start families have multiple disadvantages that include, not only limited educational experiences, but also poverty, low employment levels, and limited English proficiency. We also learned that Even Start projects have implemented various strategies to address the diverse educational needs of these families while also providing support services to enable the parents and children to make the most use of the educational opportunities. However, given the difficulties families face, retaining families, maintaining participant motivation, and assisting parents to achieve their educational goals are some of the most difficult tasks for the projects. Before discussing the 1994-95 findings in detail, the key findings regarding participation patterns from previous evaluations are presented below.

Key Findings: Past to Present

The Final Report for the first evaluation reported much of the data on families' participation for a subsample of 120 "mature" projects--projects that were in their third or fourth year of operation in 1992-93. In contrast, in both years of the current evaluation, participation rates were based on all Even Start projects that submitted data, including many first-year projects. Thus, the findings from the first evaluation reveal projects' achieving greater participation as they mature, while the findings from the current evaluation indicate the recent levels of participation for Even Start as a whole.

Adult Education: *The earlier evaluation indicated that the level of participation increases with the maturity of projects. In 1989-90, 54 percent of parents enrolled in the first 76 Even Start projects participated in the adult education component. The participation levels in the first 120 projects increased steadily to 80 percent in 1990-91, 90 percent in 1991-92, and 91 percent in 1992-93. For the year 1992-93, among the 120 third- or fourth-year projects, the average number of hours parents participated in adult education was 107. For the 1994-95 evaluation, data regarding projects' years of operation were not available. However, across ALL projects, including over 100 first- and second-year projects, 85 percent of Even Start parents participated in adult education, for an average of 100 hours per parent.*

Parenting education: *Eighty-eight percent of Even Start parents participated in some form of parenting education in 1989-90, a percentage which increased steadily in subsequent years, reaching 95 percent, for the 120 "mature" projects, in 1992-93. For 1994-95, the participation rate was 88 percent for all projects, and participating parents received an annual average of 32 hours of parenting instruction.*

__Early childhood education:__ Participation in early childhood education has remained stable and high--at least 90 percent--throughout the first six years of Even Start.

The percentage of families participating in all three core components increased steadily over the first four years of Even Start--from 46 percent in 1989-90 to 86 percent in 1992-93--for the first 120 projects. In 1994-95, 89 percent of families in ALL projects participated in all three core components.

Sixty-four percent of families participating in Even Start in 1994-95 were retained at the end of the year. This represents a substantial increase from the 53 percent retention rate in 1989-90 among the first 76 Even Start projects. The reasons for families leaving Even Start were consistent from 1992-93 to 1994-95. Some reasons for leaving were positive; heading this list was leaving after successfully completing the family's planned educational goals. Other common reasons that resulted in families leaving Even Start were moving out of the area, parents obtaining employment that prevented them from participating, poor attendance, and family crises.

This chapter examines the participation outcomes for families that participated in Even Start in 1994-95. The extent of participation by each family was assessed by the following measures:

- The number of home visits conducted during the year;
- The number of hours and type of adult education program in which parents participated;
- The number of hours of parenting education in which parents participated;
- The number of months in which children participated in early childhood education;
- The frequency of children participating in early childhood education activities;
- Whether the family participated in all or only some of the core services;
- The number and types of support services that parents and children received;
- Whether the family was still participating in Even Start at the year's end; and
- Reasons for exiting the program during the program year.

These records of participation for each family are combined across families and presented as programwide participation outcomes in this chapter. Some of the key participation measures were also analyzed by subgroups of families. The results of these analyses provide us with a greater insight into the educational challenges and motivational dynamics that differentiate various subgroups among Even Start families.

How Many Home Visits Were Made to Families?

Home visits constitute critical activities in the overall program design and service delivery of the Even Start program. The basic purpose of home visits in this program is succinctly explained in the introduction to the Home Visiting chapter of the recently released *Even Start Project Manager's Guide* (Winter, 1995) as follows:

> The practice of sending visitors into families' homes to provide parenting education is not a new idea, but one that has become an integral part of a growing number of

> family education and support programs such as Even Start. ... substantial evidence exists of the payoff of early family-focused prevention programs that employ home visiting. There is evidence as well of the costs of not providing such services in terms of child maltreatment and early school failure. ... Home visiting offers Even Start families the special advantage of one-to-one relationships that promote adult and child growth and development. It enhances the program's potential for improving the ecology of family life because of the remarkable insight gained from working in the home on a sustaining basis. (p. 1)

There is no specific number of home visits prescribed for Even Start. While the importance of home visits is beyond debate, this program component presents substantial demands in terms of staff resources and professional expertise for the projects. Projects attempt to gauge each family's need for the highly individualized form of instructional activities. Aside from the projects' decisions regarding how many home visits will be made to a given family, the number that is actually conducted also depends on the families' receptiveness to this form of instructional services.

On average, Even Start families participated in 8 to 9 home visits during the 1994-95 program year, fewer than once a month. However, across individual families, the number of home visits was highly variable. Some projects reported none, while some reported nearly 100 per family during the year. For the middle 50 percent of families (excluding the 25 percent with the fewest and 25 percent with the most number of home visits), the frequency ranged from one to 12 times a year.

Exhibit 5.1. Average Number of Home Visits, by Parents' Age (1994-95)

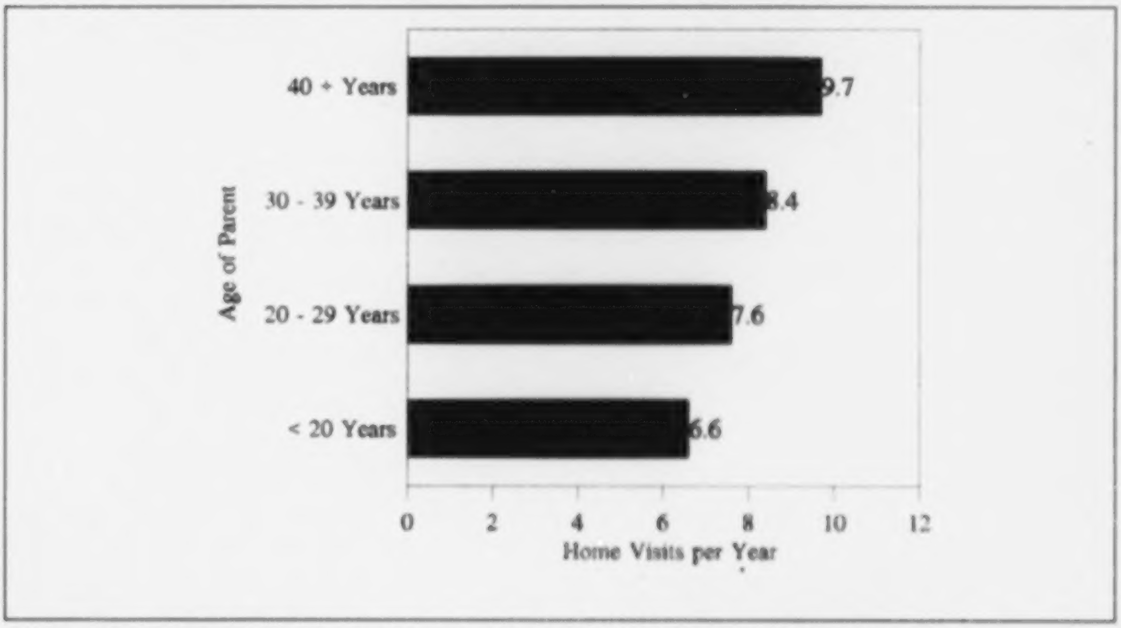

Exhibit reads: Parents age 40 years or older participated in 9.7 home visits in 1994-95.

The number of home visits varied slightly by family structure: Two-parent families participated in more home visits (average of 8 per year) than families headed by single parents (average of 7) or by extended families (average of 7). The number of home visits decreased steadily by parents' age with the most visits reported for families with parents ages 40 or older and the fewest visits in families with teenage parents (see Exhibit 5.1).

The differences across all age groups were statistically significant. These results suggest that the number of home visits conducted may reflect the receptivity of parents to having Even Start staff visit them at home as well as parents' availability at home. The families with two parents and/or older parents may be more stable and "home-oriented" than families headed by single parents and/or teen parents. The results suggest that projects with a high percentage of single-parent families and young parents find greater difficulties in scheduling and conducting home visits.

Consistent with the whole-family orientation of the Even Start program, it is expected that other adults in the family besides the parents who participate in Even Start may participate in parenting education activities during the home visits. In many cases, these adults are assumed to be spouses or partners of participating parents who also would benefit from parenting education.

In 18 percent of families, non-Even Start adults joined in parenting education activities conducted during home visits (see Exhibit 5.2). While this is not a negligible percentage, in the majority of families (83 percent), home visits appear to be attended only by parents who have enrolled in the Even Start educational services.

Exhibit 5.2. Percent of Other Adults in Family Participating in Parenting Education (1994-95)

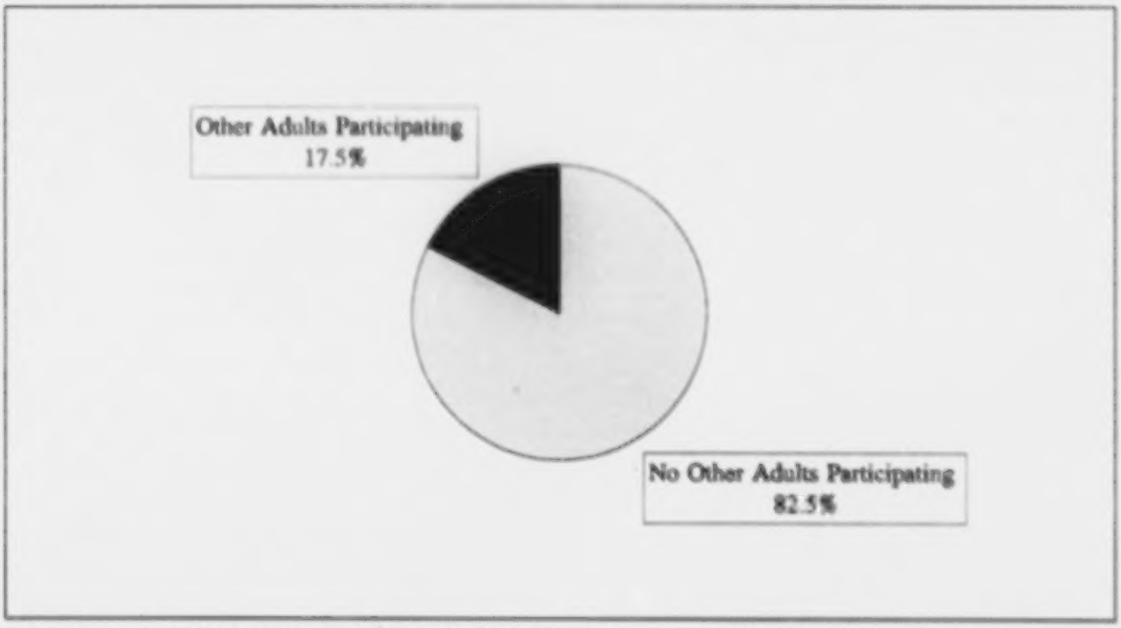

Exhibit reads: In 17.5 percent of 1994-95 Even Start families, adults who were not enrolled in Even Start also participated in parenting education activities during home visits.

What Was the Extent of Participation in Adult Education?

One of the key eligibility criteria for a family to qualify for Even Start services is the parent's need for and willingness to participate in adult education. This component is intended not only to improve literacy levels of parents, but also to better equip them to support their children's development. This section presents the types of educational services parents received and the number of hours they spent in the instructional activities.

Levels of Adult Education Services

Overall, 85 percent of the 27,465 parents, for whom we received adult education information, participated in some form of adult education program. This level of participation has held constant since 1992-93. The projects reported the type of adult education program in which each parent participated. The responses shown on Exhibit 5.3 are not mutually exclusive; that is, a parent could report having participated in one or more types of services. The most prevalent were secondary adult education and GED preparation courses in which 42 percent of Even Start parents enrolled. The next most common type of adult education was ESL in which 24 percent of parents participated. Among all parents, approximately 15 percent did not participate in any adult education services.

Exhibit 5.3.

Percent of Parents Participating in Adult Education Programs (1994-95)

	Number of Parents	Beginning ABE	Intermediate ABE	Secondary/ GED	ESL	None
All Parents	27,417	7%	11%	42%	24%	15%

Note: The percentages do not add to 100 because a participant could participate in more than one program. The percentages under each level of adult education are based on all parents who indicated the level of adult education services they participated.
Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 7 percent of participating parents participated in beginning adult basic education programs.

In general, the type of adult education program parents selected reflected the level of education completed by them at the time of intake. Exhibit 5.4 shows the types of adult education services selected by parents of different educational backgrounds. A relatively small percentage of parents participated in beginning adult basic education programs. A larger percentage of parents (15 percent) with 6th-grade education or less participated at this level than parents with more years of education before enrolling in Even Start (3 to 8 percent). However, the type of adult education program attended by the majority of parents with very limited prior schooling was ESL services (70 percent). Thus, they first needed to gain a certain level of English proficiency before turning their efforts into basic academic skills.

The largest percentage of parents who had reached 7th to 12th grades participated in secondary/GED programs. As reported in Chapter Three, 41 percent of parents had completed all but a few years of high school education at the time of enrollment in Even Start. Sixty percent of these parents participated in secondary/GED programs, presumably to complete them in a relatively short time.

Almost one-third of parents who had completed high school or GED training prior to Even Start also attended secondary education programs under Even Start. Lastly, a large number of parents who had completed some schooling beyond high school prior to enrolling in Even Start appear to be non-English speakers. Forty-three percent of these parents enrolled in ESL programs under Even Start.

Exhibit 5.4.

Percent of Parents Participating in Adult Education Programs, by Pre-Even Start Education Level and ESL Status (1994-95)

	Number of Parents	Beginning ABE	Intermediate ABE	Secondary/ GED	ESL	None
Pre-Even Start Educational Experience						
No Schooling - 6th Grade	2,713	15%	7%	7%	70%	13%
7th - 9th Grade	5,361	8%	18%	47%	21%	8%
10th - 12th Grade	7,562	5%	12%	60%	12%	10%
High School Diploma or GED	1,886	5%	6%	32%	15%	32%
Beyond High School Diploma or GED	923	3%	3%	19%	43%	25%
ESL (Speak non-English at Home)	6,745	9%	6%	16%	67%	14%

The exhibit table reads by row. For example, 15 percent of parents with 6th grade or less education participated in Beginning ABE; 7 percent participated in Intermediate ABE and Secondary/GED; 70 percent participated in ESL; and 13 percent participated in no adult education program. The percentages do not add to 100 because a participant could participate in more than one program. The percentages under each level of adult education are based on parents who enrolled in 1994-95 and also reported the levels of adult education services in which they participated.

However, the percentages of non-participants were relatively higher among parents who already had a high school diploma or GED (32 percent) and those who enrolled in Even Start with some postsecondary education (25 percent). Finally, we examined the extent of participation in ESL programs by parents who reported speaking languages other than English at home, regardless of their educational backgrounds (see the bottom row on Exhibit 5.4). A majority (67 percent) of these parents did receive ESL training under Even Start.

Hours of Participation in Adult Education

Across all parents, including those who did not participate at all, the average hours of participation in adult education was 92 for the entire program year. For the parents who participated in one or more types of adult education services, the average was 100 hours. However, the range in hours was substantial (standard deviation of 147 hours). For 80 percent of all parents who participated, the total hours for the entire program year ranged from 6 to 250 hours; 50 percent spent 46 hours or less; and the top 10 percent spent more than 250 hours.

The average participation hours of 100 (for participating parents) are slightly lower than the mean of 107.1 reported in the Final Report of the first Even Start evaluation. However, the 107 hours were based on participants from the 120 projects that were in their third or fourth years of operation. The 100 hours reported here represent participation hours from all projects operating in 1994-95, including over 100 first and second-year projects. The previous evaluation has shown that the extent of participation increases with the maturity of projects. In the next year's interim report, we will be able to group projects by length of operation and to analyze the intensity of participation in greater detail.

We reported in Chapter Four (see Exhibit 4.15) that projects **offered**, on average, over 300 hours of scheduled contact hours for adult education per year, per participant. Based on the participation records, only 5 percent of participating parents (including those who did not participate in adult education at all) spent 369 hours or more in adult education activities. The vast difference between the services offered and the actual hours of participation reported highlights the difficulty in sustaining parents' commitment to adult education programs.

Group Differences in Adult Education Participation Hours

As with the number of home visits, the hours of adult education also revealed systematic differences depending on various family characteristics.

Family Structure and Number of Children

First, family structure and the number of children in the family are related to the extent of parents' participation in adult education. As shown in Exhibit 5.5, single parents participated an average of 107 hours in adult education. In comparison, parents from extended families spent an average of 90 hours, and parents from two-parent families spent an average of 77 hours. (The average participation hours reported in this section include parents with zero adult education hours.)

Exhibit 5.5. Annual Hours of Adult Education Participation, by Family Structure (1994-95)

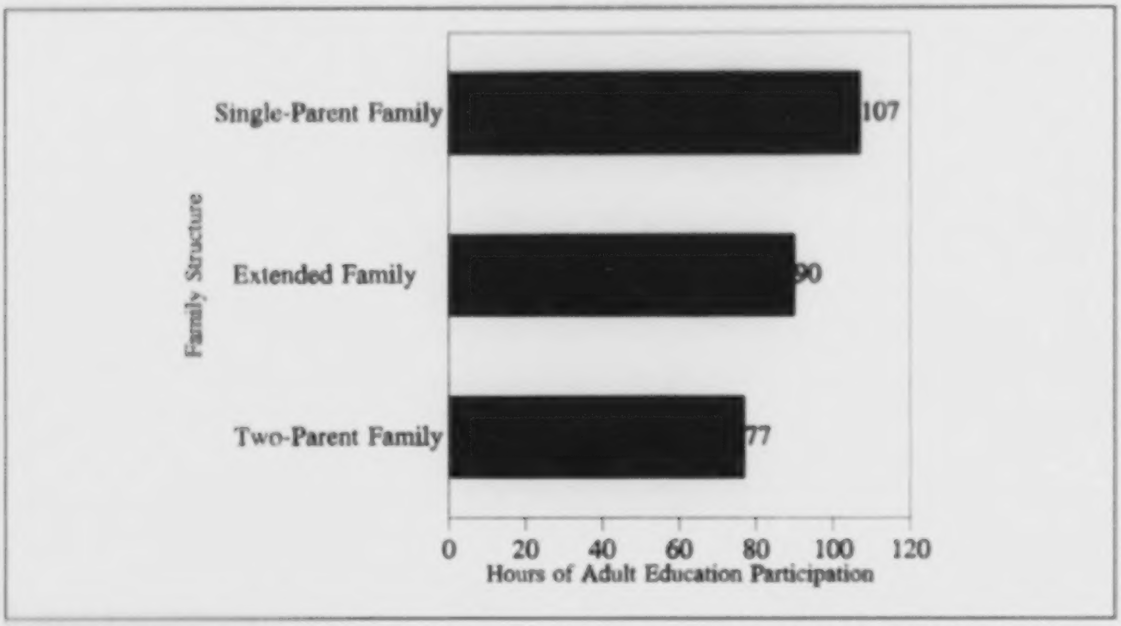

Exhibit reads: Single parents participated in 107 hours of adult education activities during the 1994-95 program year.

We also found that, regardless of family structure, parents with two or fewer children participated more in adult education (average of 95 hours) than parents with more than two children (86-87 hours). This is understandable in that fewer children allow parents more time to pursue educational activities. As we saw in Chapter Three, single-parent families tend to have fewer children than couples or extended families. Thus, single parents with relatively few children appear to be most likely to participate fully in adult education.

Additional Parent Characteristics

We further examined the extent of adult education participation in reference to the parents' age, educational background, ethnicity, and length of residence in the United States. Relatively small, though statistically significant differences were found due to age and educational level. As shown on Exhibit 5.6, parents with some postsecondary education spent more time in adult education (average of 95 hours) than parents with a high school diploma or GED (average of 83 hours). The average hours of participation in adult education activities was 86 hours for parents with 6th grade or less education. Parents in the 40 or older age group spent more hours (average of 100 hours) in adult education than parents in all other, younger age groups.

Exhibit 5.6. Annual Hours of Participation in Adult Education, by Parents' Educational Background and Age (1994-95)

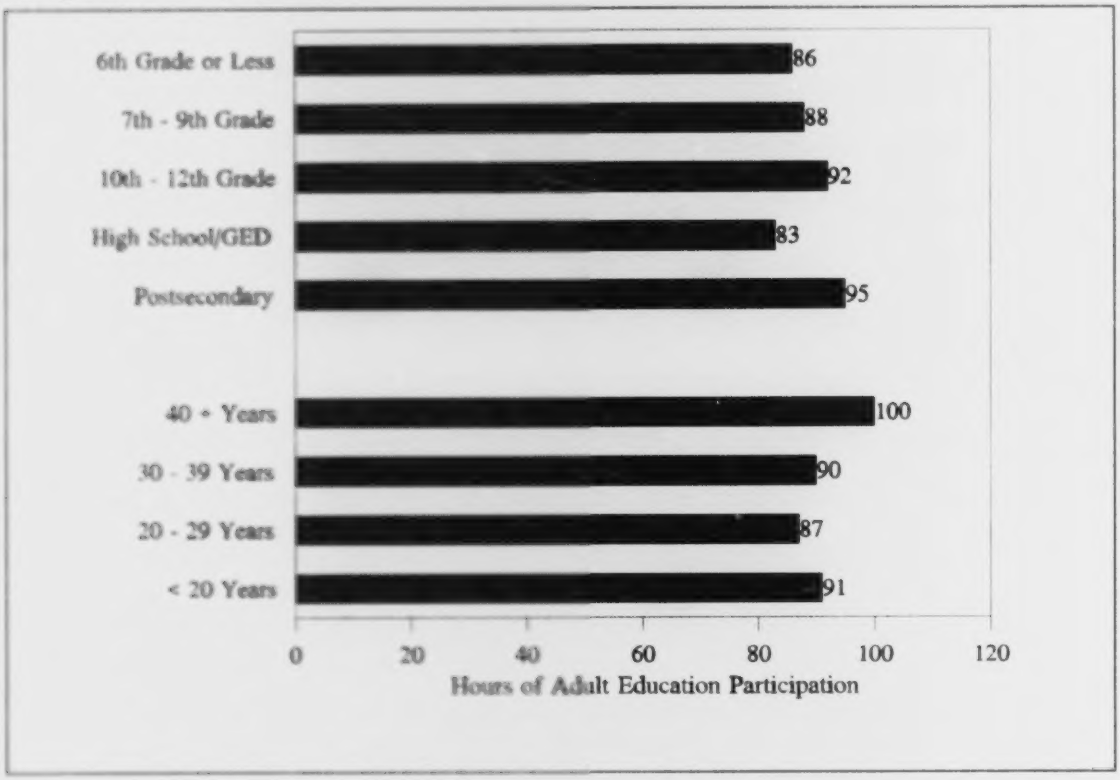

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, the average hours of participation in adult education activities were 86 hours for parents with 6th-grade or less education. The average hours of participation were 100 hours for parents who were 40 years of age or older.

More striking differences were found based on parents' ethnicity. As shown in Exhibit 5.7, the hours of adult education were the highest among Asian parents (125 hours), and second highest among African American parents (105 hours), followed by Hispanic (85 hours) and white parents (74 hours). The Native American parents had the lowest average participation (68 hours).

Overall, parents who were recent immigrants (i.e., lived in the United States for less than one year) spent more time in adult education (140 hours) than parents who had lived in the United States longer. However, for the Asian and Hispanic parents, who comprised most of the recent immigrants, different patterns of participation emerged. The most recent Asian immigrants spent slightly less time in adult education (average 123 hours per year) than Asian parents who had lived in the United States for a longer period of time (average 125-126 hours). However, the most recent Hispanic immigrants spent a far greater number of hours in adult education (average 162 hours) than Hispanic parents who had lived in the United States for one year or more (average 77-80 hours).

Exhibit 5.7. Annual Hours of Participation in Adult Education, by Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95)

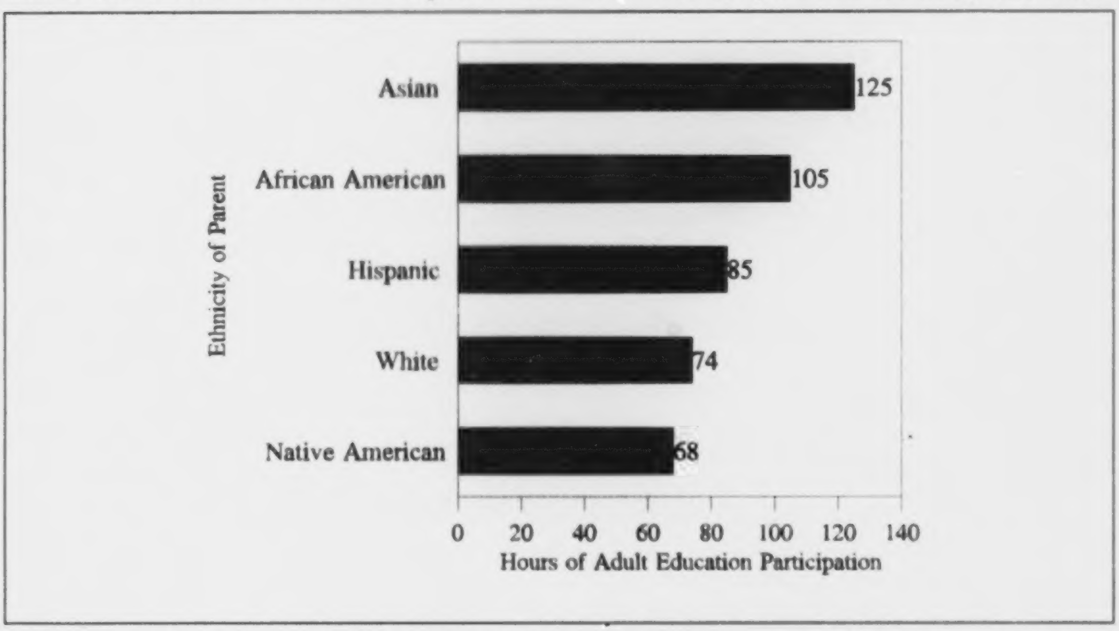

Exhibit reads: Asian parents participated in adult education programs for an average of 125 hours during 1994-95.

What Was the Extent of Participation in Parenting Education?

The Even Start model includes parenting education as one of its three core components. This component reflects the importance of parenting and home environment for facilitating child development as reported in the research literature.

Of the 27,466 parents for whom we have records of participation in parenting education, 88 percent participated in parenting education. Among parents who did participate, the average hours of annual participation were 32 hours. As with the adult education participation, there was a wide range of hours. Among participating parents, 50 percent spent 17 hours or less during the year in parenting education, while 10 percent spent 82 hours or more, and one percent spent 215 hours or more.

Sub-group Analysis of Participation in Parenting Education

Unlike the common subject areas of adult basic education, the purpose and content of parenting education are relatively unfamiliar to many people. It is possible that Even Start parents may not fully appreciate how they may benefit from this component of the program, and this lack of familiarity may interfere with the level of participation. Further, differences in family demographics and parents' backgrounds may affect parents' enthusiasm for the parenting education activities.

The subgroup analyses of parenting education participation hours revealed systematic differences depending on family structure, parents' age, educational background, and ethnicity. First, single parents spent more time (average of 31 hours annually) in parenting education activities than couples with children (average of 29 hours), and parents from extended families averaged 30 hours during the project year.

The participation hours in parenting education also differed significantly across the four age groups of parents. As shown in Exhibit 5.8, the average hours for the oldest parent group (40 years or older) was the highest (36 hours annually), while the average for teenage parents was the lowest (25 hours annually). (All differences among the group means were statistically significant.) The teenage parents spent an average of 25 hours annually, or slightly over 2 hours per month in parenting education.

Exhibit 5.8. Annual Hours of Participation in Parenting Education, by Parents' Age (1994-95)

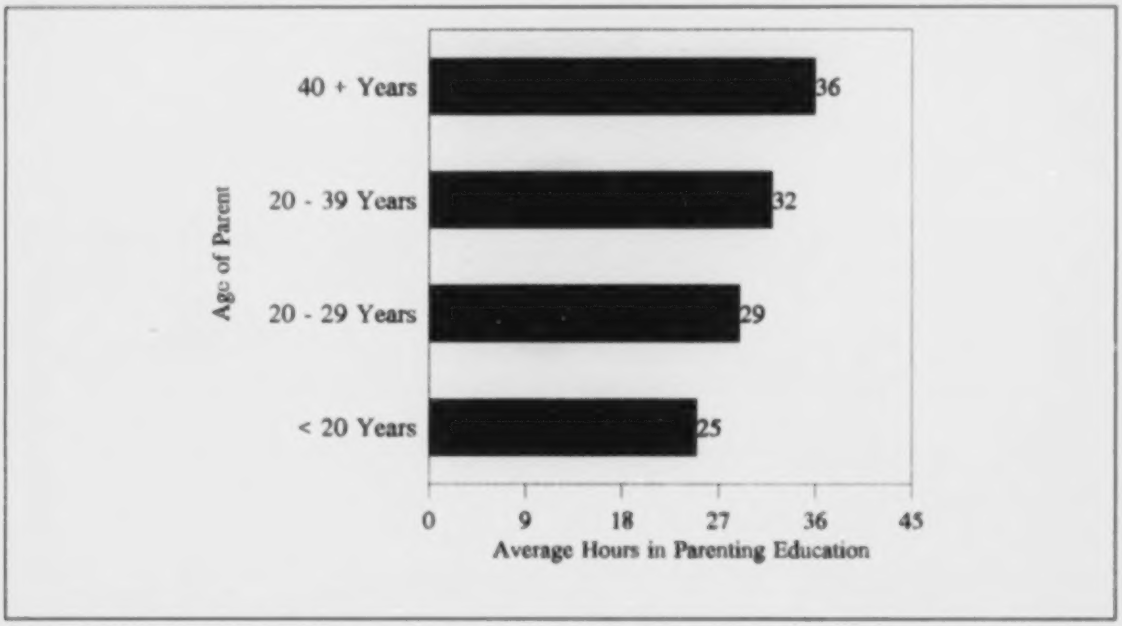

Exhibit reads: Parents who were 40 years of age or older participated in parenting education for an average of 36 hours during 1994-95.

Hours spent in parenting education also varied significantly across ethnic groups. As shown in Exhibit 5.9, the Asian parents spent the most number of hours (average 36 hours), and the Native American parents spent the least number of hours (average 25 hours).

114

Exhibit 5.9. Annual Hours of Participation in Parenting Education, by Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95)

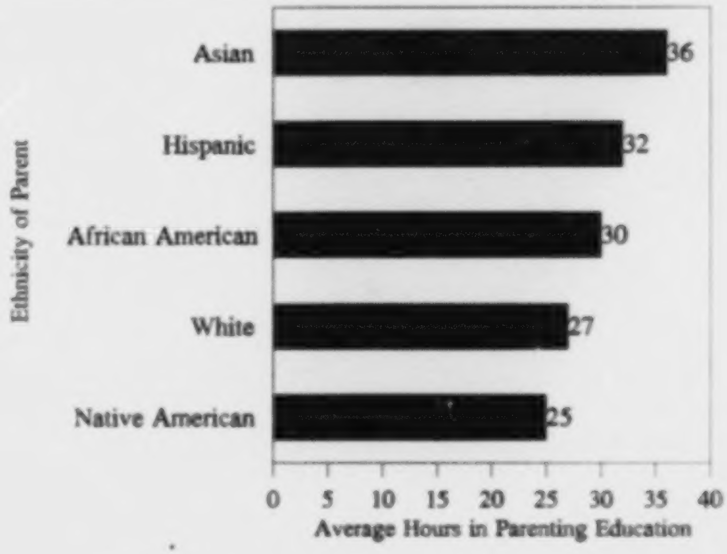

Exhibit reads: Asian parents participated in parenting education for an average of 36 hours during 1994-95.

Lastly, the hours spent in parenting education were fairly consistent across parents grouped by their educational backgrounds. The only statistically significant difference was that parents with postsecondary education (at the time of enrolling in Even Start) participated more in parenting education (average of 35 hours annually) than parents with all other educational backgrounds. There was no difference in the extent of participation in parenting education attributable to the number of children in families.

What Was the Extent of Participation in Early Childhood Education?

The third core component of Even Start is early childhood education (ECE). In reporting participation outcomes for this component of Even Start services, we first present the percentage of children who participated in various types of ECE programs.

Overall, 96 percent of the 37,695 children for whom we received participation information participated in some form of early childhood education services. The most common types of ECE services that Even Start children participated in were structured, center-based programs and individualized, home-based programs (see Exhibit 5.10). (The percentages in Exhibit 5.10 total more than 100 percent because projects could report more than one type of program for each child.)

Twenty percent of children were enrolled in compulsory education programs covering grades K-3 in which the educational activities were coordinated with Even Start activities. Another 17 percent of children attended day care programs that included educational components. Day care program services may have been provided by collaborating agencies of the Even Start grantee and may not be under direct control of Even Start project staff. Finally, approximately 7 percent of children participated in educational activities for school age children outside of their compulsory education curricula. These services could have been provided either directly by Even Start projects or through collaborating agencies.

Exhibit 5.10.

Percent of Children Participating in Early Childhood Education Programs (1994-95)

	Percent of Children
Organized, center-based ECE	44 %
Individualized, home-based ECE	45 %
Daycare with educational component	17 %
Services for school-age children outside school hours	7 %
Compulsory schooling (K-3) coordinating with Even Start	20 %

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 44 percent of children who participated in early childhood education received organized, center-based educational services.

The extent of children's participation was assessed by asking how many months they participated in early childhood education programs. Almost one-third of children participated for only 1 to 3 months. However, the majority of children participated for 7 months or longer, and 26 percent participated for 10 to 12 months (see Exhibit 5.11).

Exhibit 5.11. Percent of Participating Children, by Months of Participation (1994-95)

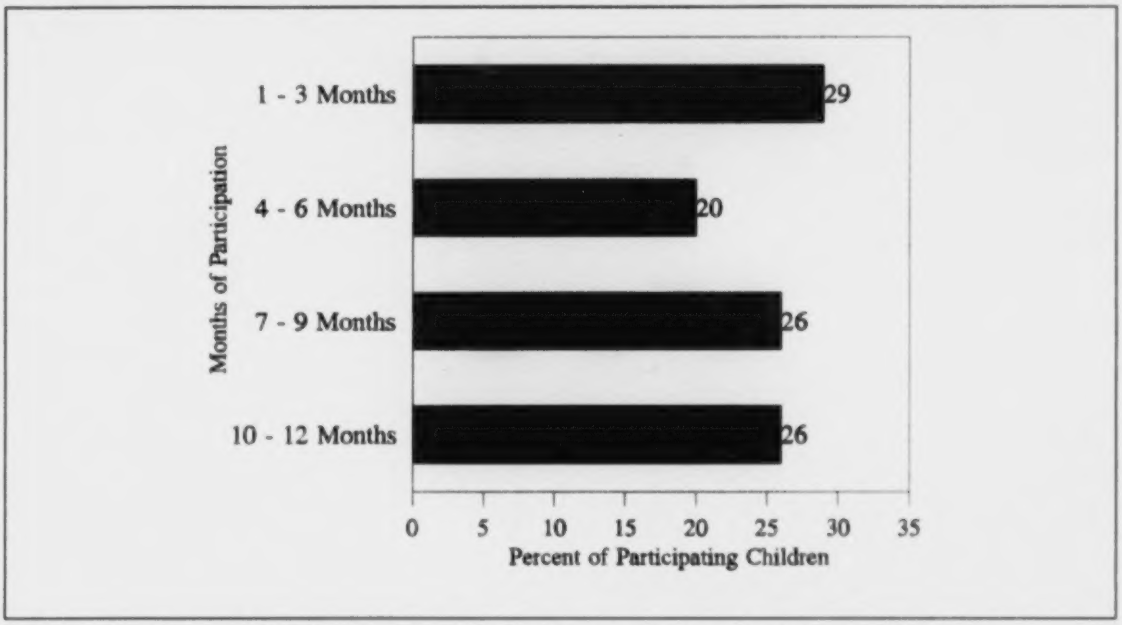

Exhibit reads: 29 percent of children participated in Even Start for 1 to 3 months during 1994-95.

The average length of participation was approximately halfway between 4 to 9 months (i.e., 6 months). More children ranging in age from preschool to mid-elementary grades participated for 10-12 months than infants and toddlers or older children (see Exhibit 5.12).

Children ages 10 or older are beyond the eligible age range for Even Start; they may be in the final phases of Even Start participation while their parents are finishing their adult education goals. These children are likely to have fully transitioned to elementary school curricula and services, requiring minimal involvement with Even Start services.

Exhibit 5.12. Percent of Children Who Attended ECE for 10-12 Months, by Age of Child (1994-95)

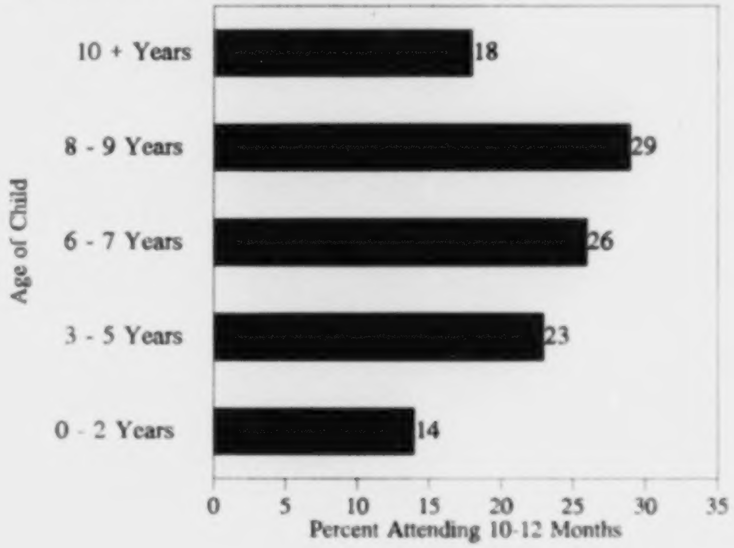

Exhibit reads: 14 percent of participating children, birth through 2 years, participated in early childhood education for 10 to 12 months during 1994-95.

Exhibit 5.13 presents the extent of participation by children in early childhood education services, by ethnicity.

Exhibit 5.13.

Percent of Children Attending Early Childhood Education Services, by Length of Participation and Ethnicity (1994-95)

	1-3 Months	4-6 Months	7-9 Months	10-12 Months	Total
Hispanic	34%	22%	26%	19%	100%
White	31%	25%	26%	18%	100%
African American	30%	21%	27%	21%	100%
Asian	24%	21%	31%	24%	100%
Native American	43%	24%	21%	11%	100%

The exhibit reads by row. For example, in 1994-95, 34 percent of Hispanic children participated for 1-3 months; 22 percent for 4-6 months; 26 percent for 7-9 months; and 19 percent for 10-12 months.

We next examined children's regularity of attendance in early childhood education activities. The majority of participating children had solid attendance records; 76 percent were absent rarely or occasionally (see Exhibit 5.14). The infants and toddlers were slightly more likely to be absent than all other age groups. However, generally, the rates of attendance were very consistent across age groups.

Exhibit 5.14. Percent of Participating Children, by Frequency of Absences (1994-95)

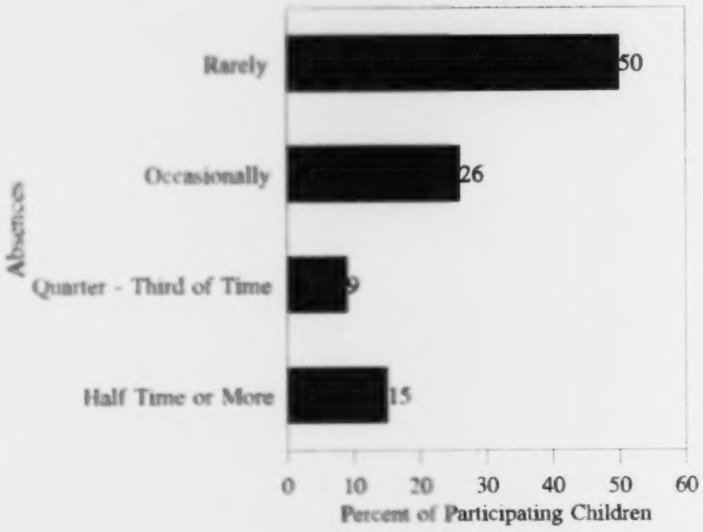

Exhibit reads: 50 percent of children who participated in Even Start during 1994-95 were rarely absent from early childhood education activities.

What Percentage of Families Participated in All Three Core Components?

Consistent with Even Start's comprehensive, family-oriented approach, families are expected to participate in all three core educational components: adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education. As shown in Exhibit 5.15, 80 percent of families participated in all three core components. Of the remaining families, 10 percent participated in adult education but failed to participate in parenting education, early childhood education, or both; 9 percent participated in parenting, early childhood education, or both, but not in adult education. Two-parent families had higher rates of participation in all core services (83 percent) than single-parent families or extended families (81 and 79 percent, respectively) (see Exhibit 5.16).

Exhibit 5.15. Extent of Participation in All Three Core Components (1994-95)

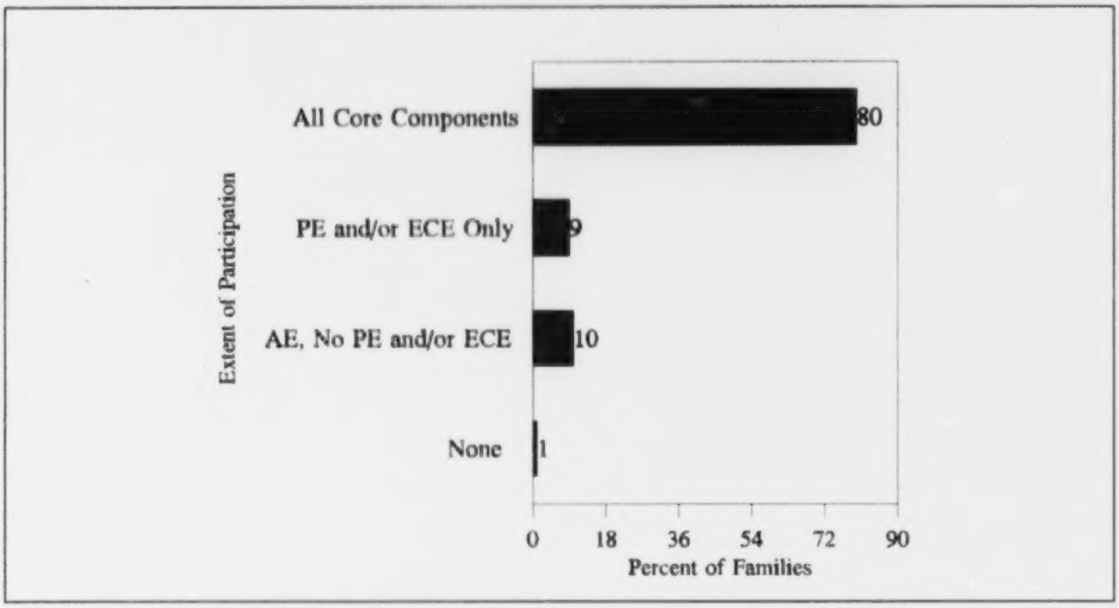

Exhibit reads: 80 percent of Even Start families participated in all three core components in 1994-95.

Exhibit 5.16. Percent of Families Participating in All Three Core Components, by Family Structure (1994-95)

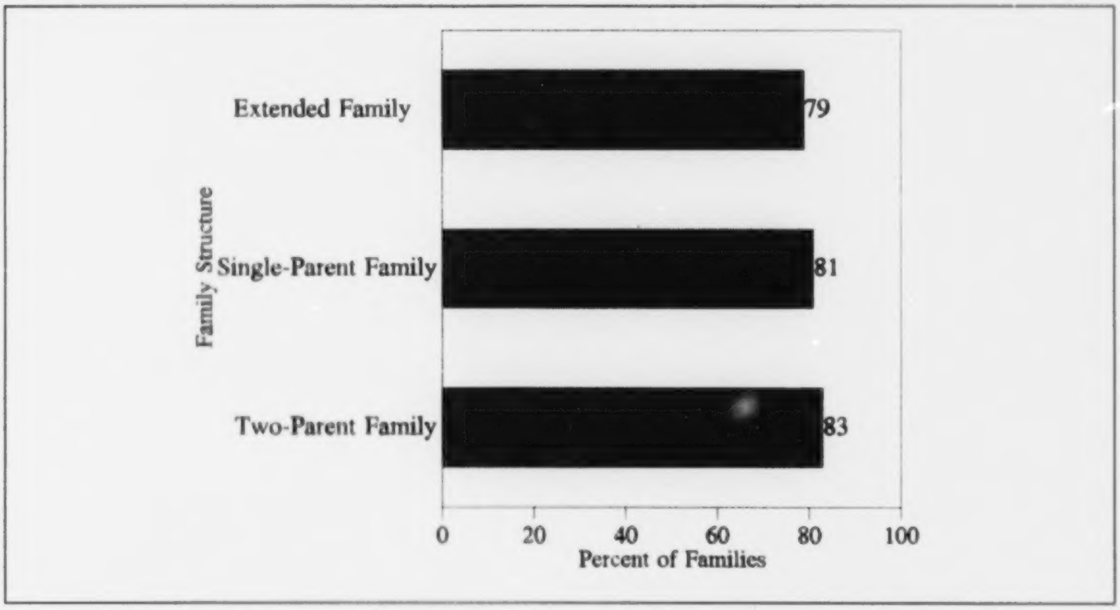

Exhibit reads: 83 percent of two-parent families participated in all three core components in 1994-95.

The likelihood of families participating in all three core components was significantly different depending on parents' age and educational background. As shown in Exhibit 5.17, families with 20-29 year-old parents had the highest participation rate (83 percent), while families with parents ages 40 or older had the lowest participation rate (79 percent).

Exhibit 5.17. Percent of Families Participating in All Three Core Components, by Parents' Age (1994-95)

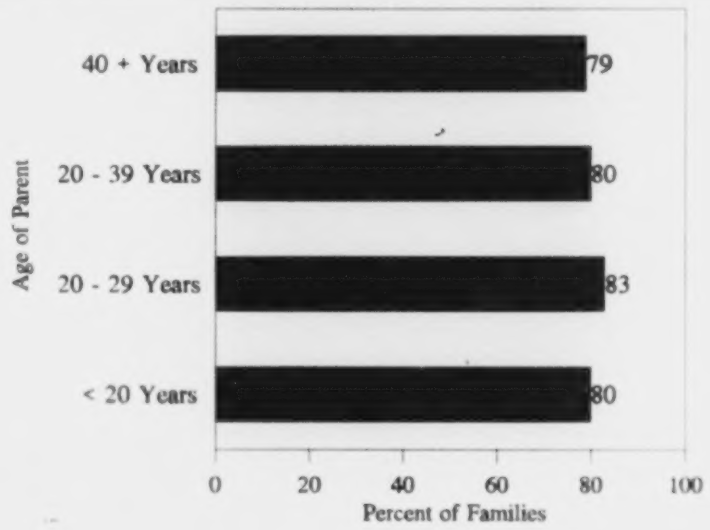

Exhibit reads: 79 percent of parents who were 40 years or older participated in all three core components in 1994-95.

While the differences among these percentages are statistically significant, the actual percentages are all in a fairly narrow range. More striking differences emerged when the percentages were compared by parents' educational background at the time of enrollment in Even Start. Families with parents who had a high school diploma, GED, or postsecondary education were less likely to participate in all three core components (72 percent) compared with families headed by parents with less education (83-84 percent) (see Exhibit 5.18).

Exhibit 5.18. Percent of Families Participating in All Three Core Components, by Parents' Educational Background (1994-95)

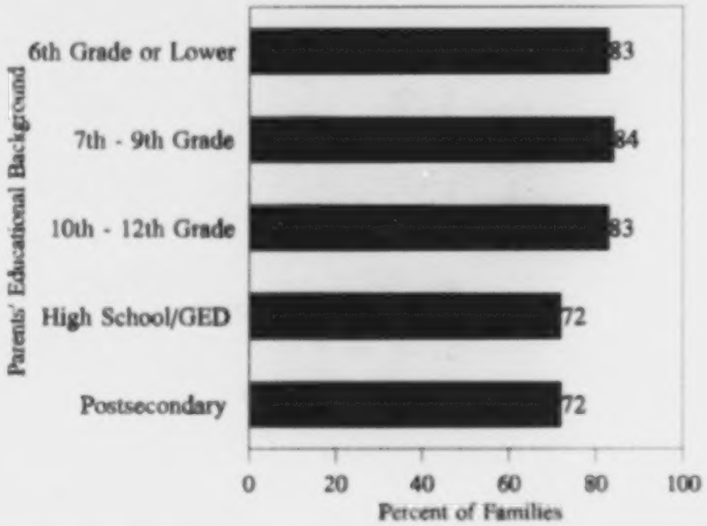

Exhibit reads: 83 percent of families where parents had 6th-grade or less education at the time of intake participated in all three core components in 1994-95.

Finally, another family characteristic that differentiated families' propensity to participate in all three core components was parents' ethnicity (see Exhibit 5.19). Native American families had significantly higher rates of participation in all three core components than Asian, Hispanic, and African American families.[12]

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[12] It is important to note that the apparent differences in participation outcomes among different ethnic groups may actually represent differences in characteristics of projects that serve primarily one ethnic group. This hypothesis seemed to apply most clearly to Native American families since they represent a small percentage of all Even Start families, and the evaluation data include those submitted from seven tribal Even Start projects. However, upon closer analysis, we found that only 26 percent of Native American families in Even Start are enrolled in these seven projects.

Exhibit 5.19. Percent of Families Participating in All Three Core Components, by Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95)

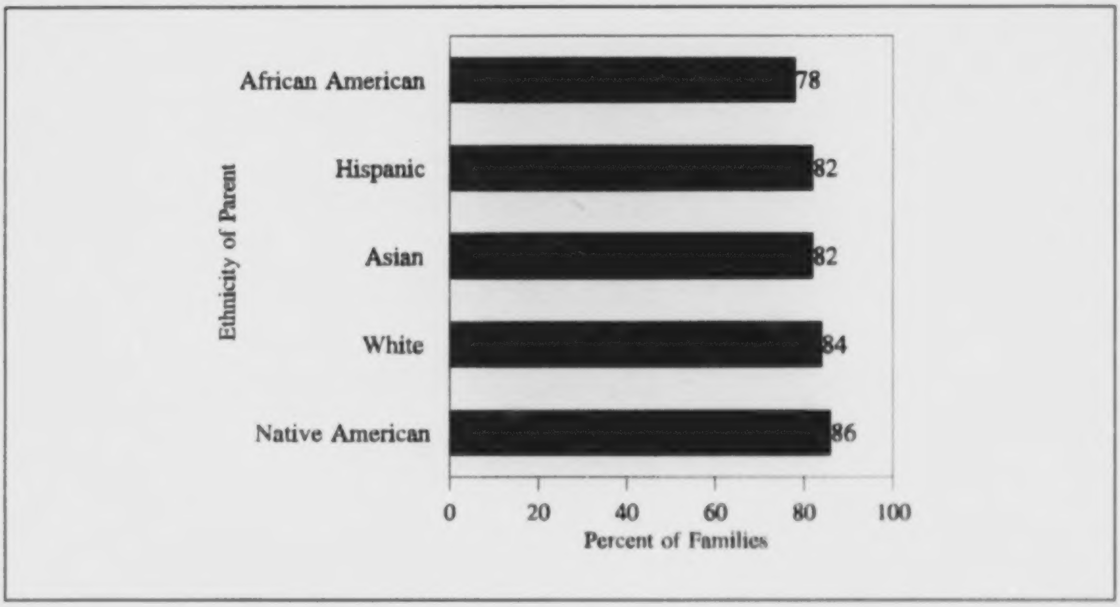

Exhibit reads: 78 percent of African American families participated in all three core components in 1994-95.

What Were the Characteristics of Families That Did Not Participate in All Three Core Components?

As indicated earlier, 80 percent of Even Start families participated in all core components; 1 percent participated in no core components; 9 percent participated in parenting and/or early childhood education services but not in adult education; and 10 percent participated in adult education but not parenting an '/or early childhood education. We examined the families that did not participate in all core components in terms of parents' age and educational background. Exhibit 5.20 shows that teenage parents (who did not participate in all core components) were much more likely to participate in adult education than older parents. The older parents were more likely to emphasize parenting and/or early childhood education, if they did not participate in all core components.

Exhibit 5.20. Percent of Parents Participating in Adult Education but Not All Core Components, by Age of Parents (1994-95)

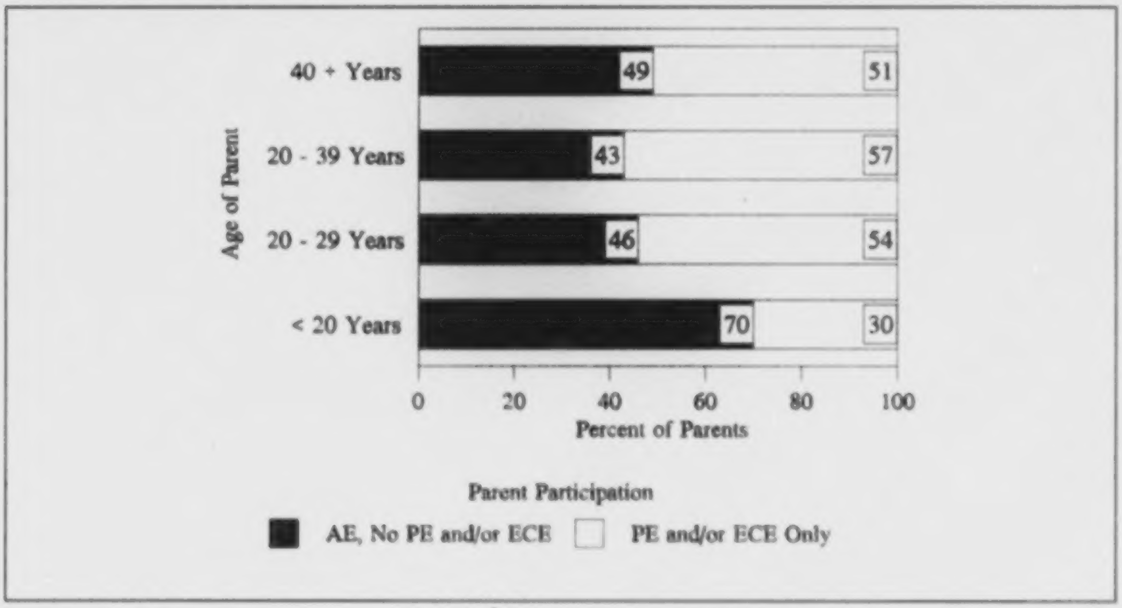

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, among families with parents who were 40 years or older, 49 percent participated in adult education but not in parenting education and/or early childhood education; 51 percent participated in parenting education and/or early childhood education but not in adult education.

Similarly, when families did not participate in all core components, families with parents that had a high school diploma or GED tended to focus more on parenting and/or early childhood education. Parents who entered Even Start without a high school diploma or GED tended to focus more on adult education (see Exhibit 5.21).

Exhibit 5.21. Percent of Parents Participating in Adult Education but Not All Three Core Components, by Parents' Educational Background (At Time of Enrollment in Even Start) (1994-95)

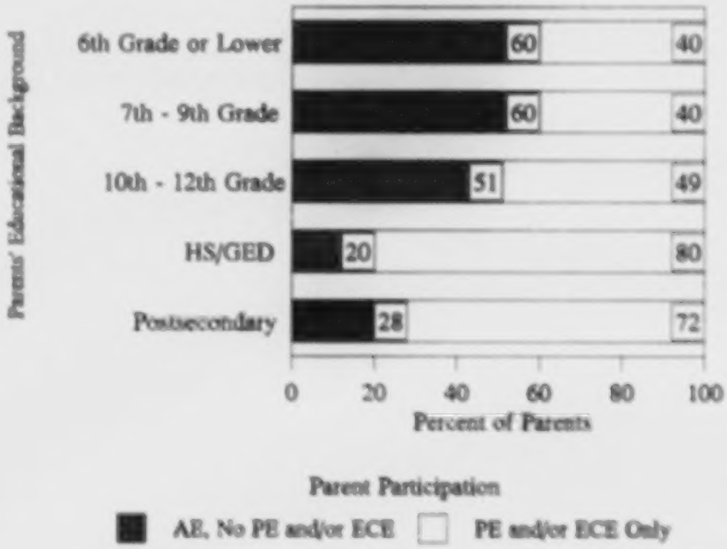

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, among families with parents who enrolled in Even Start with 6th-grade or less education, 60 percent participated in adult education but not in parenting education and/or early childhood education; 40 percent participated in parenting education and/or early childhood education but not in adult education.

What Project Characteristics Are Related to Participation Outcomes?

While the general approach of this report is to articulate the prevalent or typical profiles of projects, projects differ greatly in the content and intensity of educational services offered to families (as described in Chapter Four) as well as in many administrative and operational features (see Chapter Nine). The obvious question is to ask if, and to what degree, project characteristics are related to the extent of participation among Even Start families.

We conducted an exploratory set of simple regression analyses to detect any meaningful relationships that may emerge between measures of participation outcomes (i.e., the number of hours parents and children participated in educational services and retention status at year end) and various measures of project resources such as: amounts of federal funding; total resources (federal and local shares); cost per family; total number of Even Start staff; and total number of instructional staff. We also examined zero-order correlations between participation measures and additional project characteristics such as: hours of inservice training; topics emphasized in inservice training; extent of difficulties projects experience in implementing Even Start program; and types and extent of need for technical assistance.

None of these exploratory correlational analyses revealed clear relationships between project characteristics and participation outcomes. It is possible that more refined, intensive analyses might reveal relationships that may exist. Such special analyses will be considered as longitudinal, family-level data become available in the final two years of the study.

However, one set of exploratory analyses did produce highly significant results. These analyses focused strictly on the relationship between the number of scheduled contact hours, per year per participant, that projects offer and the hours of participation by parents and children. For each project, a measure of scheduled contact hours in adult education was constructed by summing the annual hours offered in the beginning, intermediate, and secondary/GED education levels (minimum of 0, maximum of 1,310, and average of 305 hours).[13] Likewise, for the total scheduled contact hours for parenting education, the hours with parents alone and hours with parents and children together were added (minimum of 0, maximum of 1,280, and average of 180 hours). Finally, for the total scheduled contact hours for early childhood education, the contact hours for all levels of early childhood education were added (minimum of 0, maximum of 1,980, and average of 443 hours).

We divided the projects into four groups based on the quartile ranges on each of the summed contact hour measures and compared across these four groups on the average number of hours their families participated in adult, parenting, and early childhood education services. Exhibit 5.22 shows the analysis results for adult education. Parents enrolled in projects that provide the most contact hours in adult education (more than 432 hours per year, top 25 percent of projects) participated significantly more (150 hours per year) in adult education services than parents enrolled in the remaining 75 percent of projects offering fewer contact hours (69-93 hours).[14]

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[13] We did not include the scheduled hours in ESL because some projects have no need to provide ESL instruction, and including ESL would not account for the varying degrees of need for ESL across projects.

[14] The mean of 150 hours was significantly higher than all other means; there was no statistically significant difference among the three lower means.

Exhibit 5.22. Annual Hours of Participation in Adult Education, by Adult Education Scheduled Contact Hours Offered by Projects (1994-95)

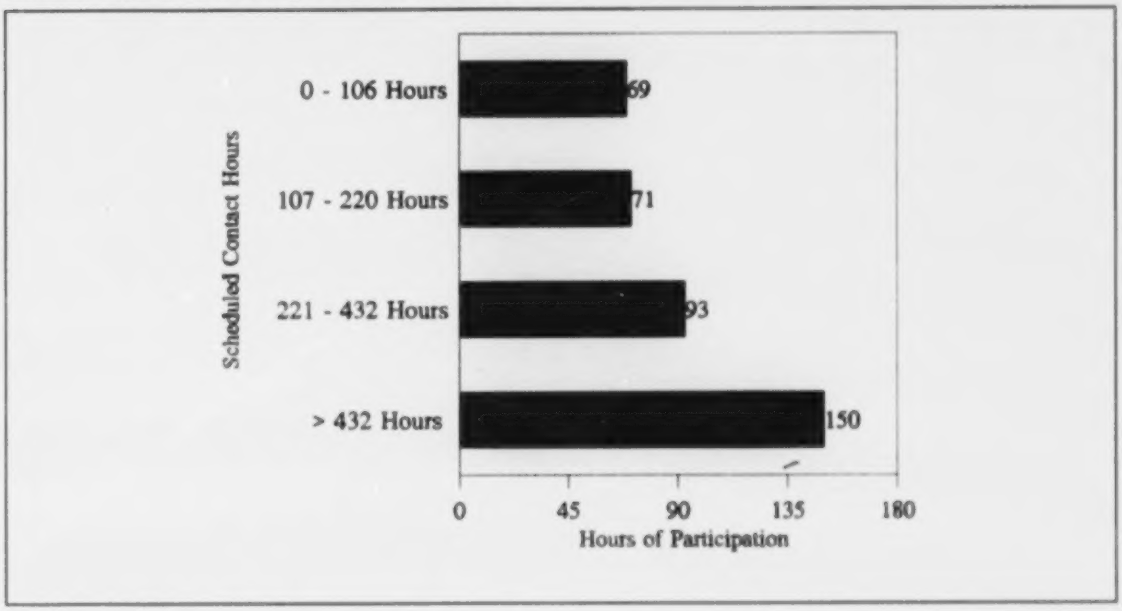

Exhibit reads: The average hours of participation in adult education during 1994-95 were 150 hours in projects that offered more than 432 hours of adult education services in that program year.

Exhibit 5.23. Annual Hours of Participation in Parenting Education, by Parenting Education Scheduled Contact Hours Offered by Projects (1994-95)

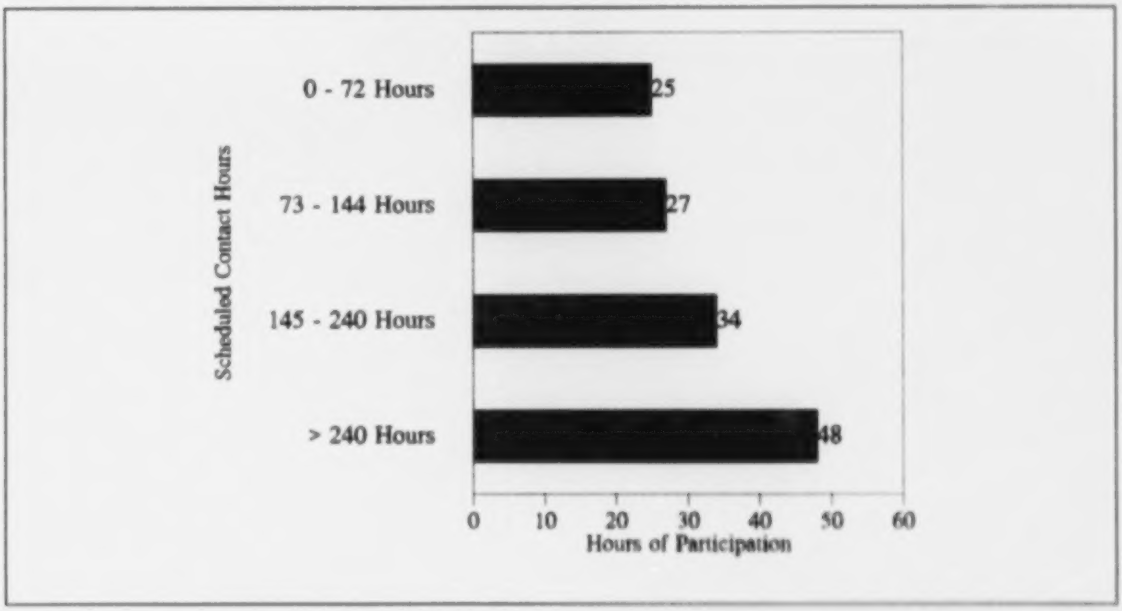

Exhibit reads: The average hours of participation in parenting education during 1994-95 were 48 hours in projects that offered more than 240 hours of parenting education services in that program year.

Similarly, the high intensity of parenting education offered by projects was related to parents spending more hours in parenting education (see Exhibit 5.23). Parents in projects that offered more than 240 hours of parenting education (top 25 percent of projects) spent an average of 48 hours in parenting education, while parents in the remaining 75 percent of projects that offered less than 240 hours of parenting education spent 25-34 hours in parenting education.[15]

Comparable relationships between service intensity and participation hours were not found for early childhood education. This may be due to the measure of children's participation being less refined than the actual hours of participation reported for parents.

What Support Services Did Parents and Children Receive?

As a comprehensive educational program that is oriented to the improvement of the overall functioning of the entire family, Even Start stipulates the provision of support services that allow parents and children to maximize the educational opportunities made available through the program. We learned in Chapter Four that projects typically offer a wide range of support services to participating families. We also learned that some services are needed by most families in most projects, while the need for other services may be more localized or dependent upon the characteristics of participating families. In this section we present the types and extent of support services that participating families actually received. Exhibit 5.24 presents the number and percent of parents and children receiving various types of support services during 1994-95.

The support services most commonly received by Even Start parents were child care (53 percent), transportation (45 percent), family support (39 percent), and meals (39 percent). The services that children most commonly received were child care (48 percent), meals (47 percent), and transportation (44 percent).[16] The parent and child data validate the pervasive need for these services by the entire family. They also echo the projects' reports of families' need for these services as discussed in Chapter Four.

Somewhat lower percentages of families received the type of services that are likely to be provided through referrals and by collaborating agencies. For example, 34 percent of parents received social services; 27 percent received health referrals or screening; and 18 percent received employment assistance.

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[15] The mean of 48 hours was significantly higher than all other means; there was no statistically significant difference among the three lower means.

[16] Child care is included among the types of support services parents receive, meaning that child care services are made available for their children to allow the parents to attend educational services. The apparent difference between the percentages of parents and children receiving this service may be due to different levels of missing data for parents and children. Another possible reason is that families with multiple children in Even Start outnumber families with multiple adults participating in Even Start. Thus, a parent with one 3-year-old and one 7-year-old may receive child care for the younger child but not necessarily the older child.

Exhibit 5.24.

Number and Percent of Parents and Children Receiving Support Services (1994-95)

	Parents		**Children**	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Transportation	12,203	45%	16,668	44%
Child care	14,365	53%	18,023	48%
Meals	10,530	39%	17,812	47%
Employment assistance	4,828	18%	N/A	N/A
Counseling	N/A	N/A	4,112	11%
Family support	10,618	39%	N/A	N/A
Health care, referral, screening	7,298	27%	10,109	27%
Social services	9,254	34%	N/A	N/A
Translator, interpreter	3,913	14%	3,865	10%
None	4,352	16%	8,475	23%

Note: "N/A" indicates the types of support services that were assessed only for parents or children, but not both. Exhibit reads: 45 percent of Even Start parents received assistance with transportation in 1994-95.

In Chapter Three we indicated that 37 percent of parents speak languages other than English at home and the majority of these parents have limited English proficiency. Most likely reflecting the needs of these families, 14 percent of all Even Start parents received the services of translators and interpreters.

In addition to child care, meals, and transportation, 27 percent of children also received health care. Another 11 percent received counseling, which may consist largely of developmental assessment and guidance. While this evaluation does not collect data to assess the English proficiency among children, 10 percent of children received services of translators and interpreters.

Finally, 16 percent of parents and 23 percent of children received no support services.

Subgroup Analyses of Receipt of Support Services

As with other measures of program participation, we examined the extent of families receiving support services by subgroups defined by family structure, number of children, age of parent, and age of child. First, based on the total of eight types of support services parents could receive, single-parent families received an average of 3 types of support services, which was more than the average of 2.8 types of services that extended families received, and 2.6 types of services that two-parent families received (see Exhibit 5.24).

Exhibit 5.25. Average Number of Support Services Parents Received, by Family Structure (1994-95)

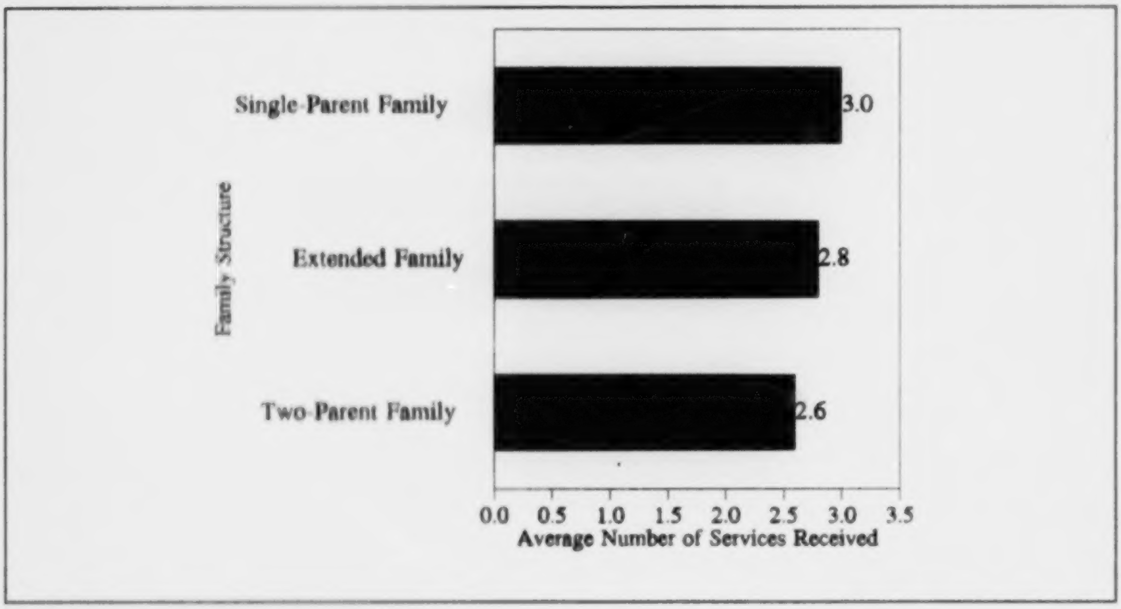

Exhibit reads: Single-parent families received an average of three types of support services during 1994-95.

In comparison to families grouped by the number of children, those with more than three children received more support services (average of 2.9) than families with three or fewer children (average of 2.7). Families with older parents received fewer support services (average of 2.7) than families with parents 39 years or younger (averages of 2.7 and 2.8); however, the number of support services families received did not differ greatly by parents' age. Thus, while these group differences were statistically significant, they are not substantially different; all subgroups defined by various family and parent characteristics tended to receive, on average, three types of support services.

Subgroup analyses of six types of support services children received (i.e., transportation, child care, meals, counseling, health-related services, and translator) revealed additional differences. First, school age children, compared to younger children, received fewer support services provided by Even Start, either directly or through referrals (see Exhibit 5.26). The primary factor that differentiates preschool and school age children would be the need for child care. Older children may not need child care because Even Start services are offered to them during school hours, and their parents are home when they get home.

Exhibit 5.26. Average Number of Support Services Children Received, by Age of Child (1994-95)

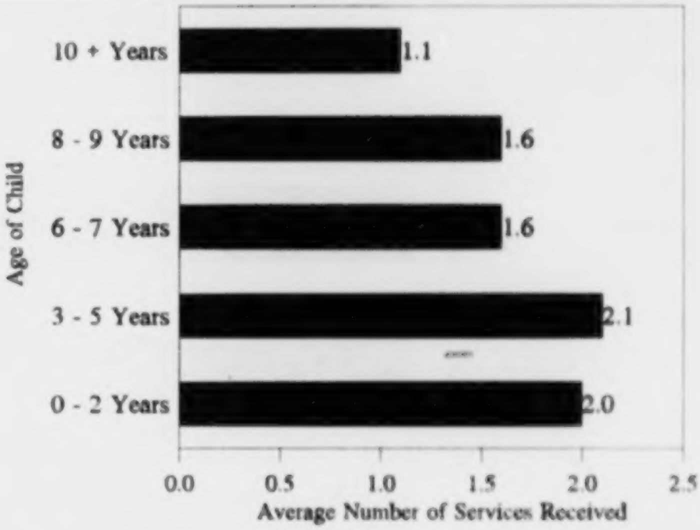

Exhibit reads: Children who were 10 years or older received an average of 1.1 type of support services in 1994-95.

Lastly, Hispanic children received slightly more support services (2.2) than Native American children (2.0). Both of these groups received more services than Asian, African American, or white children; the averages for these three groups did not differ significantly (1.8-1.9). These differences were statistically significant, but did not reveal any dramatic differences among children of different ethnicities.

How Many Children Had Special Needs?

Along with participation records for each child, project staff indicated whether a child had been identified as having any special needs. Staff could mark one or more special needs from a list of eight different types: speech/language impairment; visual impairment; hearing impairment; orthopedic impairment; serious emotional disturbance; mental retardation; specific learning disability; and developmentally delayed.

We did not ask who identified the presence of special needs (e.g., Even Start staff, medical professionals, child's parents). Presumably, Even Start staff were primarily responsible for identifying some of the needs such as speech/language impairment. Other types of needs (e.g., visual, hearing, and orthopedic impairment) most likely involved testing by medical professionals.

A relatively small percentage of Even Start children (12 percent) have special needs (see Exhibit 5.27). As shown on Exhibit 5.28, among the children identified with special needs, the three most common types of conditions were: speech/language impairment (41 percent); developmental delays (35 percent); and specific learning disabilities (15 percent).

Exhibit 5.27. Percent of Children With Special Needs (1994-95)

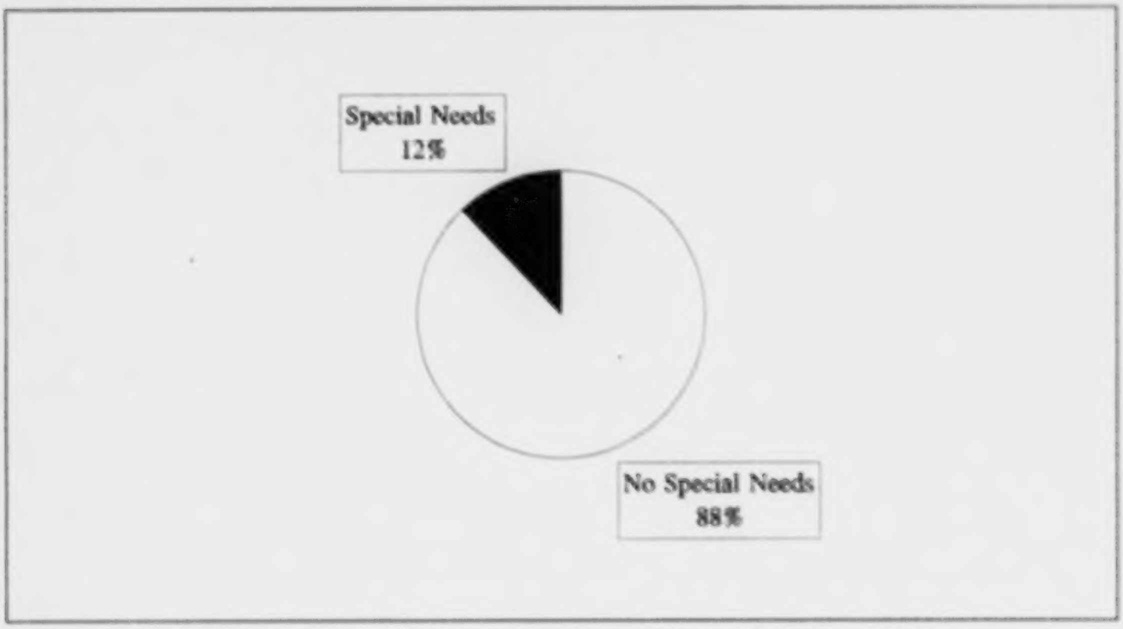

Exhibit reads: 12 percent of Even Start children were identified as having special needs in 1994-95.

Exhibit 5.28.

Number and Percent of Children with Special Needs, by Type of Needs (1994-95)

	Number	Percent
Speech/language impairment	1865	41%
Visual impairment	228	5%
Hearing impairment	224	5%
Orthopedic impairment	186	4%
Serious emotional disturbance	291	6%
Mental retardation	123	3%
Specific learning disability	655	15%
Developmentally delayed	1586	35%
Other	887	20%

Note: The percentages are based on the number of children identified with special needs.
Exhibit reads: 41 percent of children who were identified as having special needs in 1994-95 were reported to have speech/language impairment.

What Were the Patterns of Retention?

We examined the patterns of retention in the program through analyses of the following data:

- Whether or not the family was still participating at the end of the 1994-95 program year; and

- If the family had exited the program during the year, the specific reasons for termination (e.g., whether they exited for reasons such as completing the specified goal or for reasons such as failure to attend scheduled educational activities).

Percentage of Families Retained at Year End

Of the 24,869 families for whom the projects provided year end status, 64 percent were still retained at year end; 36 percent had left the program during the year (see Exhibit 5.29). (The extent of retention may have been somewhat lower than 64 percent since there were approximately 3,300 families that were in the program at some point during 1994-95 but for whom we have no participation records.)

Exhibit 5.29. Percent of Families Continuing Participation at Year End (1994-95)

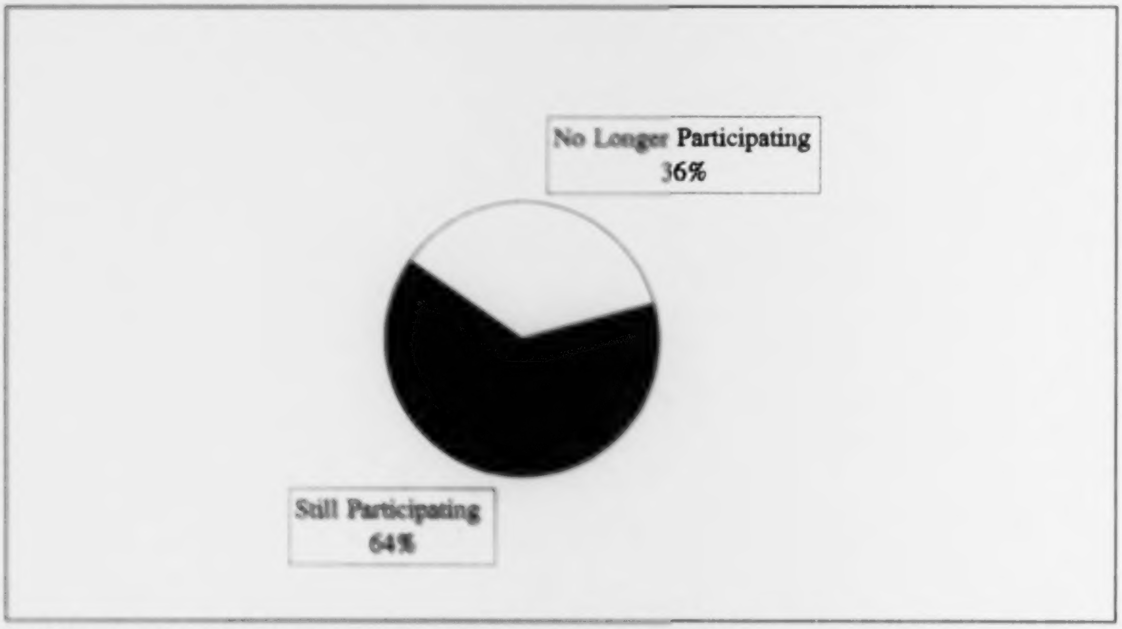

Exhibit reads: 64 percent of families that participated in Even Start in 1994-95 were continuing participation at year end.

Reasons for Termination

For the nearly 9,000 families that left the program, the projects reported the specific reasons for termination. Thirteen percent of families that exited had completed their planned educational goals (see Exhibits 5.30 and 5.31).

The most common reason for termination was a family moving out of the project area (16 percent). Other reasons for termination included: parents obtaining employment that prevents participation in Even Start (13 percent); family being dropped due to poor attendance (13 percent); and conflicts or problems (10 percent).

Exhibit 5.30.

Reasons for Terminating Participation
(Number and Percent of Families That Terminated, 1994-95)

	Number	Percent
Family moved out of the area	1422	16%
Family members met goals or completed planned education	1166	13%
Parent(s) found employment that prevents participation	1162	13%
Family was dropped due to poor attendance	1136	13%
Conflicts or problems prevented continued participation	908	10%
Family stopped due to a lack of interest	846	9%
Family crisis prevents further participation	538	6%
Parent or child switched to a different program	300	3%
Other	841	9%
Reason unknown	787	9%

Note:The percentages are based on 8,969 families that left Even Start during 1994-95.
Exhibit reads: Among families that left Even Start program in 1994-95, 16 percent had moved out of the service area.

In addition, the write-in descriptions provided by projects to elaborate other reasons for termination varied widely. However, many of those "additional reasons" were similar to the reasons we provided for this question. Notably, an additional 34 families could no longer be serviced because they had moved out of the Even Start service area, either by moving to another county, state, or country. An additional 33 families left the program because the parent's employment prevented them from participating. Specific situations included a parent having to work double shifts for an extended period of time or parents who had to take on a second part-time job.

Exhibit 5.31. Reasons for Terminating Participation, by Percent of Families That Terminated (1994-95)

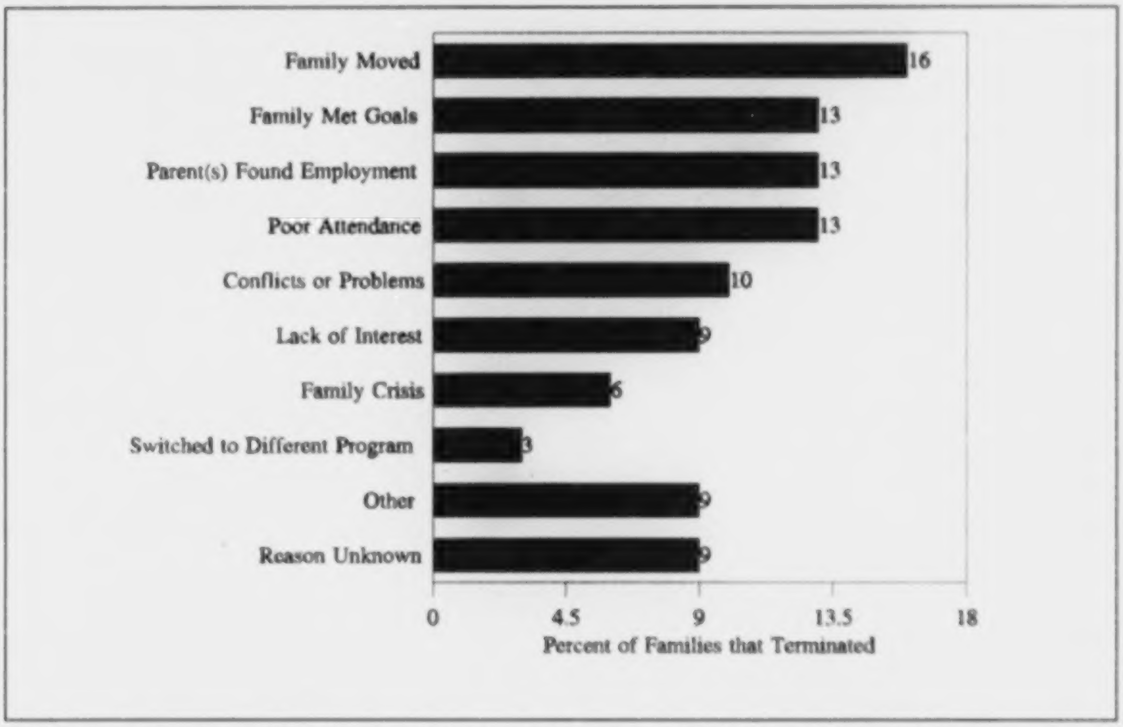

Exhibit reads: 16 percent of families that left the Even Start program in 1994-95 moved out of the program area.

Finally, an additional 19 families dropped out of Even Start because either the parent or child switched to a different program. Program alternatives to Even Start for adults included the federal JOBS program, Americorps, ROTC, EPPPA, the BEGIN Program, PTEC, and OJT Program Social Services (12 families). Seven families dropped out because their children enrolled in a program that provided services similar to Even Start (e.g., Head Start and Green Acres).

Exhibit 5.32 lists additional written responses cited for five or more families. These responses may be divided into two categories: (1) reasons for dropping out that have their origin in the Even Start families themselves, or are "Family driven"; and (2) reasons that are primarily driven by program features and constraints, which we will refer to as "Program driven" reasons. These reasons are described in more detail following the exhibit.

Exhibit 5.32.

"Other" Reasons for Families Discontinuing Participation in Even Start (1994-95)

Reasons	Number of Families
Family-Driven Reasons	
Parent looking for work	15
Child care or daycare not available	18
Medical conditions; physical illness; serious injuries; health problems (e.g., problem pregnancy); special needs beyond the scope of Even Start	125
Parent(s) earn living as migrant worker(s)	16
Death of participant Mother died (2) Child died (5) Unspecified participant died (4)	11
Male spouse would not allow parent to participate	6
Child enrolled in regular preschool or kindergarten program	7
Parent in jail	10
New baby; mother on maternity leave or choosing to stay at home	67
Parent received GED or is awaiting results	10
Parent returned to school; enrolled in college, job training, vocational/technical program, community college, etc.	36
Mother got married	5
Lack of transportation	22
Child removed from the home; placed in foster care	16
Parent(s) did not participate: In general (23) Refused home visits or number of "no shows" (4) Refused parenting class (1)	28
Unable to locate; address unknown	28
Family exited the shelter	51
Enrolled but never returned or dropped out after first few classes	28
Program-Driven Reasons	
Insufficient staff; staff turnover	50
Even Start center or site closed down	8
End of program year	18
Child "aged out"; too old	24
Child's school no longer in Even Start service area	10
Summer program only (with Head Start)	8

Exhibit reads: 15 families left the program because the parents' looking for employment prevented them from continuing Even Start participation in 1994-95.

Family-Driven "Other" Reasons

The vast majority of families who dropped out of Even Start did so because of problems or issues occurring within their family. These reasons varied, ranging from a parent returning to school or advancing his or her postsecondary education, as was the case for 36 families, to a parent going to jail (10 families).

By far the most frequently cited "other" reasons for leaving Even Start were health related. One hundred and twenty-five families left Even Start because of physical illness. Of these, high-risk, difficult, or problem pregnancies were the largest single category (28 families). In most cases, health issues pertained to the parent or parents; however, instances of chronic asthma, for example, were given as reasons for children not returning to the program.

An additional 67 families left because of the birth of a new child. Unlike the "problem pregnancies" subsumed within the "Medical Reasons" category, this category included families in which mothers were in the advanced stages of pregnancy as well as families in which the mother chose to or had to remain at home to care for the new infant.

Finally, it is important to understand that, for many families, there were multiple factors that mitigated against their continued participation in Even Start. For example, the Even Start mother who drops out because she has a new baby inevitably has child care needs that may be difficult to meet. Some projects had families with multiple problems who had to be included in several categories (e.g., substance-abusing parent, mental health problems, and homelessness).

Program-Driven "Other" Reasons

Fifty families were dropped from Even Start due to "insufficient staff or staff turnovers." In 24 cases, the target child was "aged out." In nearly all cases, this meant that he or she had turned eight years old; however, in one case, a project only served children up to the age of four. Finally, 18 families were "dropped" because the project year ended to coincide with the school year.

Families That Continued Participation or Completed the Program

We further examined families that were either continuing participation at year end or exited the program after completing the planned educational activities, or switched to a different educational program.

These families were examined through comparisons of subgroups defined by the following family and parent characteristics:

- Family structure;
- Parents' educational level at the time of intake;
- Parents' age;
- Parents' ethnicity; and
- Parents' ESL status.

The rates of retention and successful completion varied by family structure. As shown on Exhibit 5.33, a higher percentage of two-parent families and extended families continued to participate or successfully completed the program (74 and 72 percent, respectively) compared to single-parent families (67 percent).

Exhibit 5.33. Percent of Families Retained or Completed, by Family Structure (1994-95)

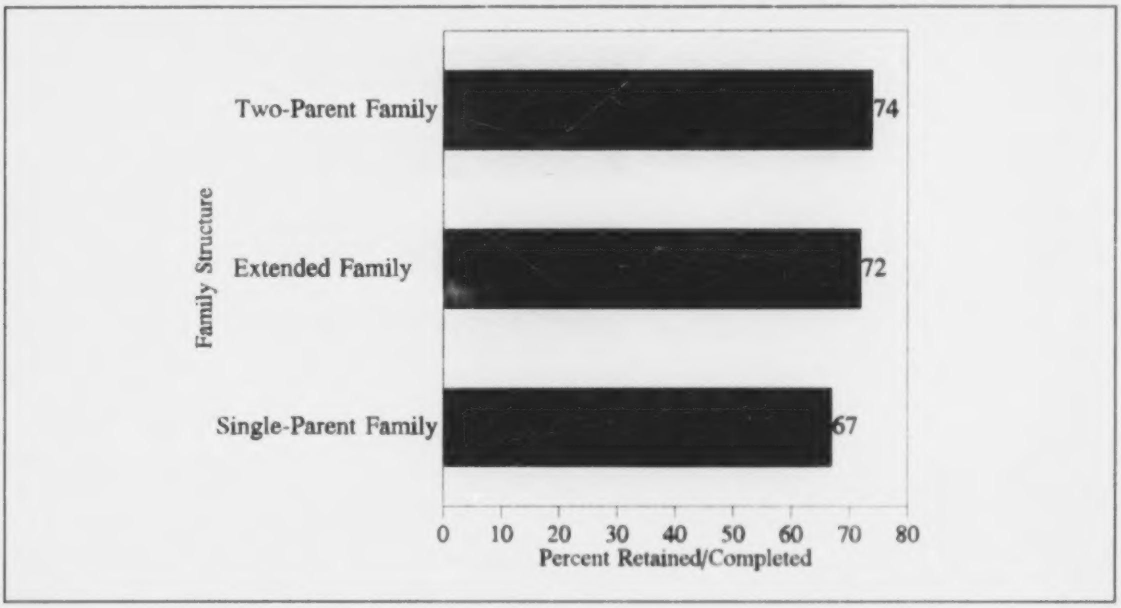

Exhibit reads: 74 percent of two-parent families were either continuing participation at the end of 1994-95 or left the program after achieving their educational goals.

Families headed by parents with either very low or relatively high levels of education were more likely to be continuing or to have successfully completed the program (see Exhibit 5.34) than parents in the mid-range of educational experience. Seventy-five percent of parents with a 6th-grade or lower education, and 77 percent of parents with a high school diploma, GED, or some postsecondary education continued or completed their educational goal (these percentages did not differ significantly). In contrast, parents with 7th- to 12th-grade education (but no high school diploma) had significantly lower rates of retention or successful completion.

Exhibit 5.34. Percent of Families Retained or Completed, by Parents' Educational Level (1994-95)

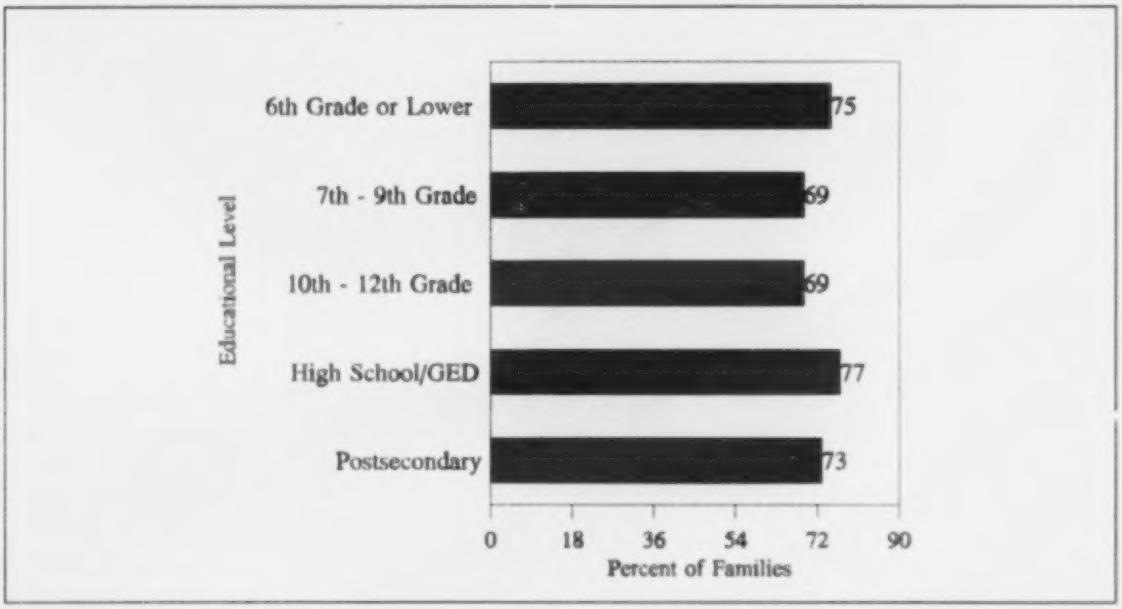

Exhibit reads: 75 percent of families where parents had 6th-grade or less education at the time of intake were continuing participation at the end of 1994-95 or had successfully completed their educational goals and left the program.

The rates of retention and successful completion also differed by parents' age. Families with older parents were retained or successfully completed the program significantly more often (75 to 78 percent) than families with parents younger than 30 (66 to 69 percent) (see Exhibit 5.35). The difference between the 30-39 year-old group and the 40 or older group (75 and 78 percent, respectively) was also significant.

The rates of retention and successful completion were similar across ethnic groups. The only significant difference was between Hispanic and African American families (74 and 68 percent, respectively) (see Exhibit 5.36).

Exhibit 5.35. Percent of Families Retained or Completed, by Parents' Age (1994-95)

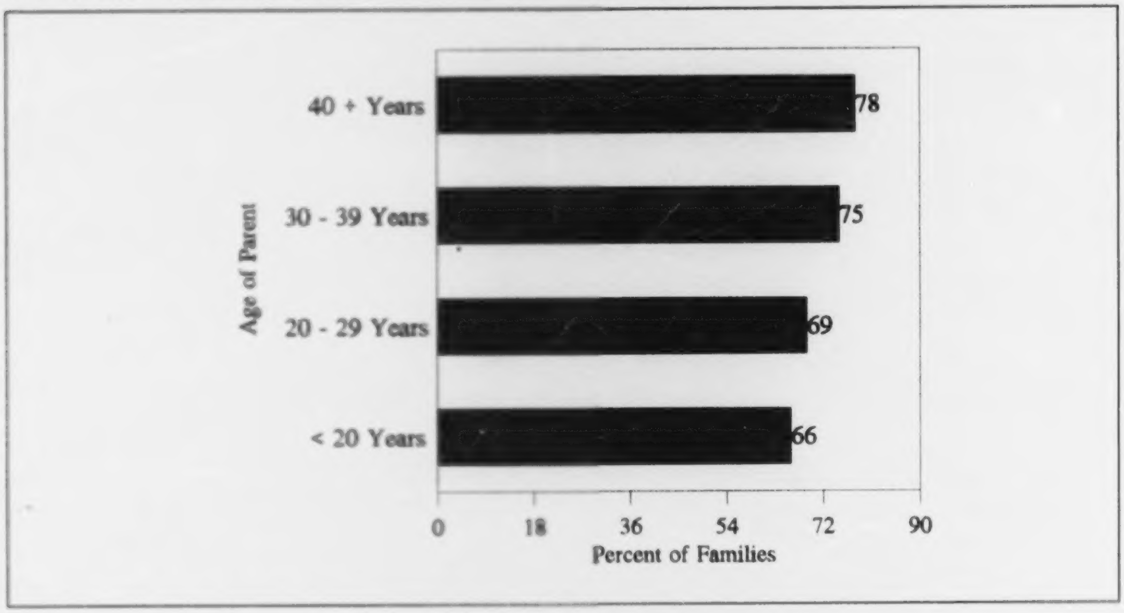

Exhibit reads: 66 percent of families headed by parents younger than 20 years were continuing participation at year end or had successfully completed the program in 1994-95.

Exhibit 5.36. Percent of Families Retained or Completed, by Parents' Ethnicity (1994-95)

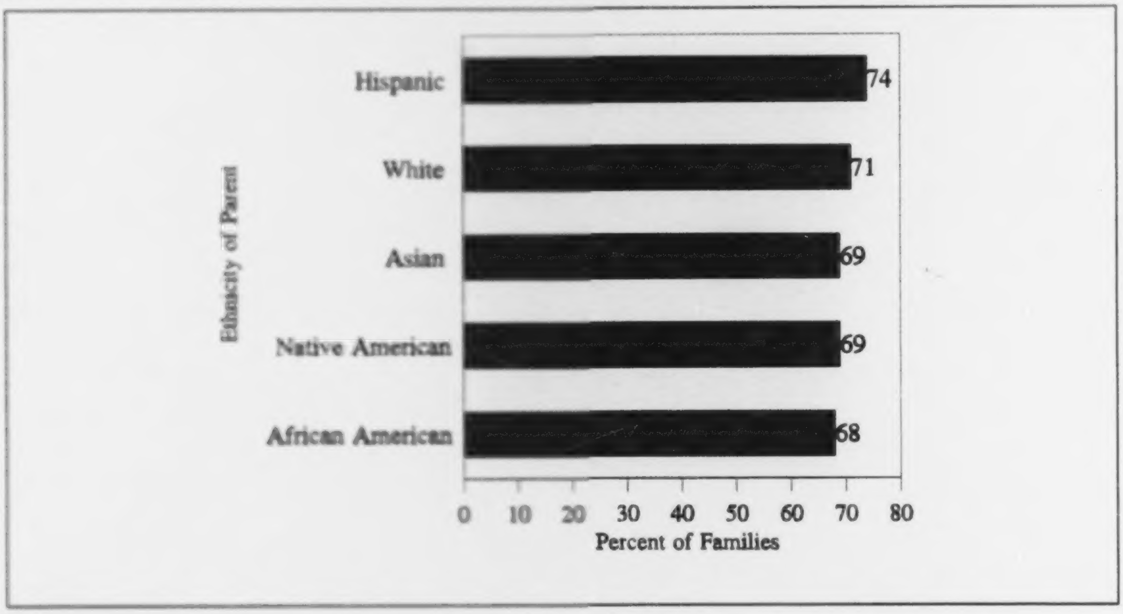

Exhibit reads: 74 percent of Hispanic families were continuing participation at year end or had successfully completed the program in 1994-95.

We also examined the possible impact of limited English proficiency on the retention patterns of Hispanic and Asian families. These two ethnic groups account for the majority of ESL families in Even Start. As Exhibit 5.37 shows, among Hispanic families, those that speak English at home were less likely to stay in the program or to have completed it successfully than those who speak other languages at home (65 versus 75 percent, respectively). However, the pattern was reversed among Asian families. Seventy-five percent of the Asian families that speak English at home were retained or successfully completed the program, while 68 percent of Asian families that do not use English at home were retained or successfully completed.

Possible reasons for these different retention patterns have not been identified. More refined analysis of data is not feasible because of the relatively small number of Asian families in Even Start. However, the retention patterns of these language-minority groups will be tracked across the subsequent years of this evaluation.

Exhibit 5.37. Percent of Families Retained or Completed, by Parents' Ethnicity and ESL Status (1994-95)

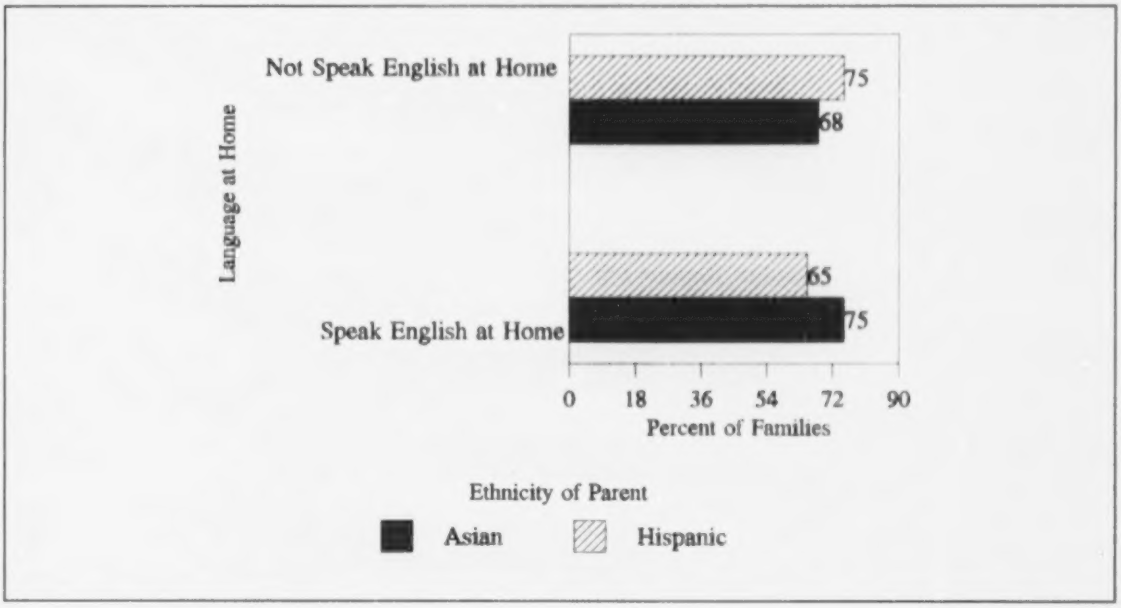

Exhibit reads: Among Hispanic parents who did not speak English at home, 75 percent were continuing participation or had successfully completed the program in 1994-95.

Characteristics of Families That Exited the Even Start Program Unsuccessfully

To each family that exited the program during 1994-95, we assigned a code to indicate whether or not the reason for their exit was negative. The negative exit was based on: poor attendance; family problems preventing participation; lack of interest; and family crisis preventing participation. Across all families that exited, at least 38 percent (9,104 families) exited for negative reasons.[17] Subgroup analyses of these families revealed several notable differences.

First, the analysis by family structure resulted in a mirror image of the results for retention and successful completion described above. Families headed by single parents were more likely to exit for negative reasons (43 percent) than extended families or two-parent families (37 and 34 percent, respectively). (These percentages are based on families that exited, not including the 64 percent that were retained.)

In terms of parents' educational background, we found a bi-modal pattern similar to the one reported earlier regarding retention and successful completion. Here, families with parents who either have very low or relatively high educational backgrounds were less likely to exit for negative reasons than parents with mid-range educational experience (see Exhibit 5.38).

Exhibit 5.38. Percent of Families Exiting for Negative Reasons, by Parents' Educational Background (1994-95)

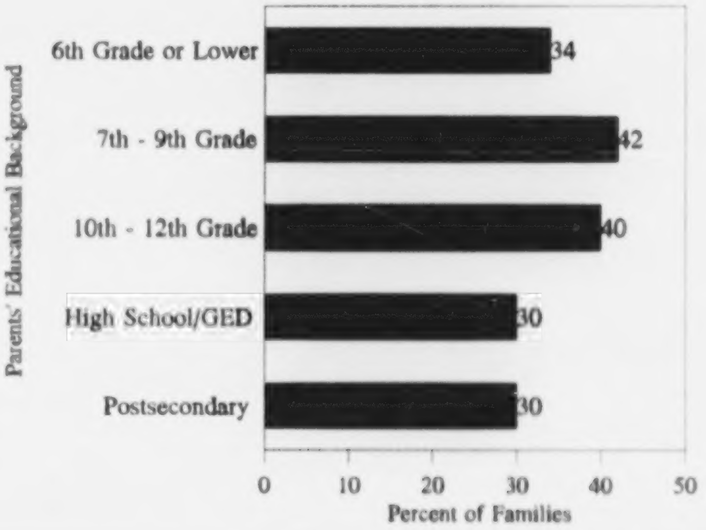

Exhibit reads: 34 percent of families where parents enrolled in Even Start in 1994-95 with 6th-grade or less education had left the program for reasons such as lack of interest and poor attendance.

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[17] The ambiguous reasons (e.g., family moved out of the area), other reasons, and reasons unknown were not included in creating the index of "negative/positive" exit. Accordingly, these families are not included in the percentages of "negative"-exit or "positive"-exit families.

Finally, families with parents younger than 30 years were more likely to exit for negative reasons than families with older parents (see Exhibit 5.39).

Exhibit 5.39. Percent of Families Exiting for Negative Reasons, by Parents' Age (1994-95)

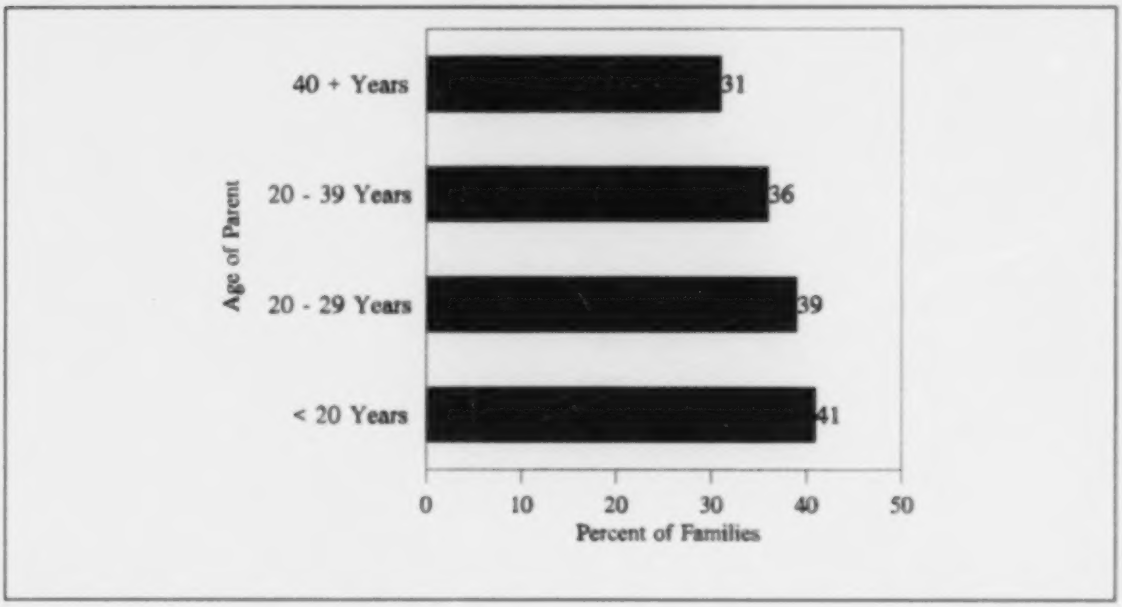

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 41 percent of families headed by parents younger than 20 years left the program for reasons such as lack of interest and poor attendance.

Chapter Six

Do Projects Serve the Families Most in Need?

The ultimate goal of Even Start is to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by expanding educational opportunities available to low-income families with limited educational experiences. One of the core components of this program is to improve the basic academic and literacy skills of parents. By also providing parenting and early childhood education, the program takes a comprehensive, systemic approach to assisting families to overcome their economic and social hardships and to achieve a better quality of life for themselves and their children. Further, the Even Start statute specifically directs that grantees identify and serve families who are most in need.

One of the broad research questions addressed in the Even Start evaluation concerns the characteristics of participating families. We have discussed numerous characteristics of the participating families in Chapter Three. After a brief summary of findings from the previous evaluation, this chapter focuses more closely on "families most in need." First, we present a data-driven profile of families most in need, then examine where they are more likely to be found. We also examine whether any relationships exist between project characteristics and the prevalence of extremely needy families across projects. The chapter concludes by reporting the participation outcomes of the extremely needy families who enrolled in Even Start in the 1994-95 program year.

Key Findings: Past to Present

The 1992-93 evaluation revealed that, even among the 21 percent of adults who entered the program already having earned a high school diploma or GED, 40 percent were single parents, 67 percent were unemployed, 78 percent had an annual income below $15,000, 54 percent relied on government assistance as their primary source of income, and 20 percent spoke a primary language other than English. The Final Report from the first evaluation concluded:

> *"In total, 89 percent of the adults who entered Even Start with a high school diploma or GED met one or more of the above need-based criteria, and 93 percent of all Even Start adults met one or more of the criteria" (p. 67).*

The 1994-95 findings presented in this chapter provide additional, systematic evidence that the vast majority of Even Start projects continue to recruit and serve families in their communities that are most in need of the program services.

What Are the Characteristics of Families Most in Need?

We constructed a measure of families most in need based on: (1) general knowledge of types of economic and social disadvantages relevant to the Even Start program and (2) distributions of Even Start participants on these characteristics to identify families more in need than the average Even Start families. We selected the following seven features of families and parents as indicators of family need level:

- Low income: Based on family annual income of less than $9,000. This criterion applies to 57 percent of Even Start families at intake.[18]

- Single-parent family: This criterion applies to 39 percent of Even Start families at intake.

- Parent's limited educational experience: Completed 8th grade or lower. This criterion applies to 28 percent of Even Start parents.

- No earned income: Families that rely on government assistance or alimony as the primary source of income. This criterion applies to 49 percent of Even Start families.

- Currently receiving government assistance: This criterion applies to 43 percent of Even Start parents.

- English as second language: Parents who speak a language other than English at home. This criterion applies to 37 percent of parents.

- Multiple children: Families with three or more children ages 15 or younger. This criterion applies to 57 percent of families.

To create an "extreme need index" for each family, we counted the number of the seven need indicators listed above that a family matched. The need index that resulted represents a combination of multiple difficulties including: severe poverty; problems and challenges associated with being a single-parent family; having low employability due to limited educational experiences; limited English proficiency; and the difficulty of raising multiple children given very limited income and occupational capabilities. Families can range from 0 to 7 on this need index where 0 indicates the absence of extreme need relative to other Even Start families, and 7 indicates the presence of all seven need indicators.

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[18] Missing data were treated as missing data, not as absence of need. Most of the data used to derive the need index represent changeable characteristics of families such as family income, family structure, parents' educational experience, and parents' English proficiency. Further, these data are collected for this evaluation only at the time of families' enrollment in the program. For these reasons, the analyses reported in this chapter that use the need index pertain only to families that enrolled in 1994-95. In addition, the need index was derived as a parent characteristic and also as a family characteristic. In families with multiple adults participating in Even Start, we selected the first adult record to represent the need index for the family.

For approximately 26,000 parents who enrolled in 1994-95, the average on the need index was 2.6. Thus, on average, Even Start parents had about 3 of the 7 extreme needs listed above. While 25 percent of parents had 4 or more of the need indicators, about 10 percent were found to have none of the extreme need indicators.

Where Do the Families Most in Need Live? What Are Their Other Characteristics?

The families most in need may be distributed evenly across the nation, or they may be more concentrated in certain areas. As we saw in Chapter Three, the distribution of ESL parents were clustered in certain regions and states. Information on the prevalence of highly needy families in certain areas would be important for project directors as well as national policy makers in fine-tuning the legislation, guidance, and program designs. The first distribution analysis was by region and by type of community (urban, rural, mixed).

The average need index varies slightly depending on region. The highest average is in the Northeast (2.7) and in the Midwest (2.7). The average for the South is 2.6, and the average for the West is 2.5. The differences across types of community are more pronounced with the highest need index reported in urban projects (2.8), the next highest in "mixed" communities (i.e., urban and rural areas) (2.6), and the lowest in rural projects (2.5).

However, the analyses revealed an interaction effect between region and community type. That is, the differences between urban and rural areas were not the same across all regions. Exhibit 6.1 shows the average levels of extreme need by region and community.

Exhibit 6.1.

Average Extreme Need Index, by Region and Type of Community
(Number of Parents in Analysis, 1994-95)

	Northeast	South	Midwest	West
Rural	2.3 (1670)	2.5 (5606)	2.4 (1584)	2.5 (2027)
Mixed	3.1 (481)	2.7 (3291)	2.2 (535)	2.3 (1068)
Urban	3.0 (1496)	2.7 (3508)	3.0 (2315)	2.6 (2496)

Exhibit reads: On average, Even Start families in the rural areas of the Northeast experienced 2.3 types of extreme needs in 1994-95.

Since we learned that some of the need indicators are more prevalent among certain sub-groups (e.g., ESL and single-parent families), we examined the average extreme need index by parents' ethnicity and age. A striking pattern of differences emerged.

As shown in Exhibit 6.2, on average, the African American parents experienced combined effects of 3 to 4 extreme need indicators, significantly more than parents in any other ethnic group. The Asian/Pacific Islander parents and Native American parents also reported higher than the Even Start average levels of extreme needs. It must be noted that most of the African American and Native American parents do not have the ESL disadvantage, and yet reported some of the highest need levels. Most of the Asian parents have the ESL disadvantage. The Hispanic parents, many of whom also have the ESL disadvantage, fared better as a group than all other minority groups.

Exhibit 6.2. Average Extreme Need Index, by Ethnic Groups (1994-95)

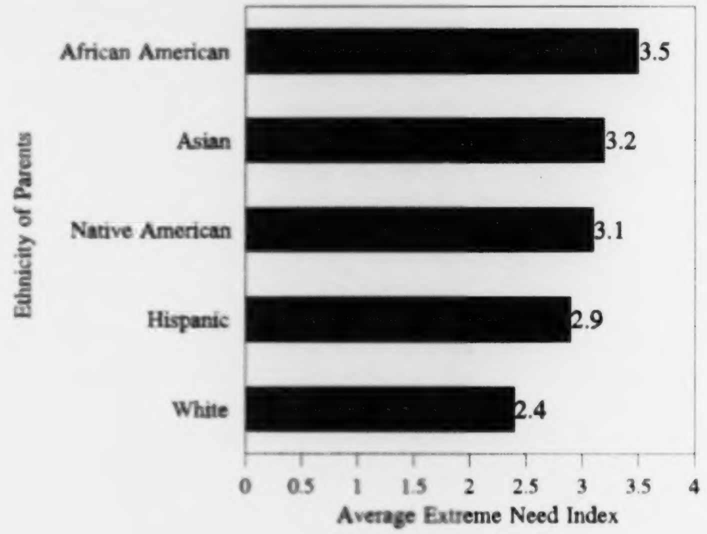

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, African American families in Even Start had an average of 3.5 types of extreme needs.

Examination of levels of need by parents' age reveals relatively consistent averages (see Exhibit 6.3). However, the types of need contributing to the teenage parents' circumstances and the types of needs faced by the oldest group may be quite different.

Exhibit 6.3. Average Extreme Need Index, by Parents' Age (1994-95)

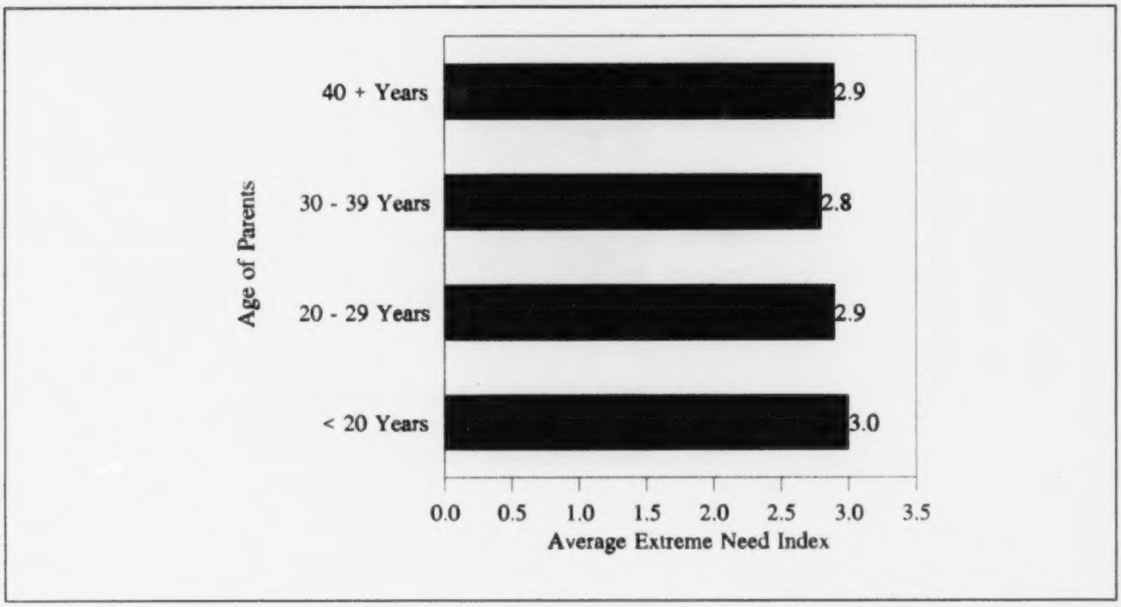

Exhibit reads: Even Start families headed by parents 40 years or older had an average of 2.9 types of extreme needs in 1994-95.

What Percent of Projects Serve Extremely Needy Families?

We further created an aggregate measure of need index at the project level by calculating for each project the percent of families that have 3 or more of the extreme need indicators.

On average, the percent of extremely needy families in projects was 55 percent. However, one-quarter of projects had 38 percent or fewer families with extreme need levels, while in another one-quarter of projects, 73 percent or more of their caseload had extreme levels of need (see Exhibit 6.4). Given this variation in the percentage of extremely needy families across projects, we examined possible relationships between project characteristics and the proportion of extremely needy families being served.

Exhibit 6.4. Percent of Extremely Needy Families in Projects (1994-95)

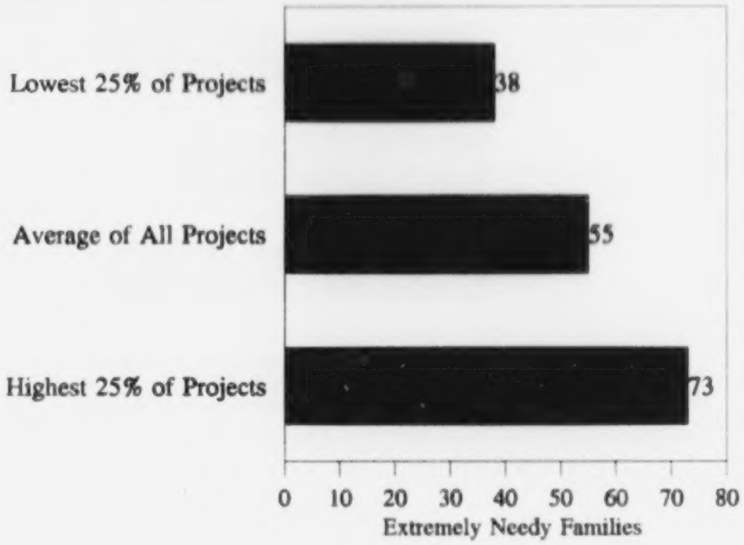

Exhibit reads: On average, 55 percent of 1994-95 Even Start families across all projects had 3 or more types of extreme needs.

The project characteristics we examined included: staffing patterns (e.g., a higher percentage of family specialists and social workers); focus on family assistance in inservice training; projects' need for technical assistance in areas of providing support services; extent of collaboration with other agencies to maximize available resources and the range of services provided to families; targeting of families most in need in recruitment and screening; number of hours of educational services offered to participants; and projects' report of need for various types of support services among their families. The purpose of these analyses was to explore whether projects with high percentages of extremely needy families strengthen any aspects of their program resources and operations to address the prevalence of extreme needs among their participants.

The analyses revealed that only two of the project characteristics listed above are related to the percentage of extremely needy families in projects. As reported in Chapter Three, most of the Even Start families are needy in many respects compared to the general population. In addition, the projects are challenged to serve as many families, as effectively as possible, with limited resources.

The two features of projects that are related to the percentage of extremely needy families are: the extent of educational services offered (number of hours per year) and projects' reporting of the extent of their families' need for support services.

For the number of educational services offered, projects with high percentages of extremely needy families offered significantly more hours of educational services than projects with low percentages of extremely needy families. This pattern was consistent across every level of educational services (i.e., beginning adult basic education, intermediate adult basic education, secondary education, parenting, and various levels of early childhood education). Exhibit 6.5 presents the number of hours/year of beginning adult basic education offered by projects, grouped by percentage of extremely needy families.[19] This exhibit exemplifies essentially the same pattern found across all educational services. Exhibit 6.6 presents the average contact hours per year of parent-child joint activities, and Exhibit 6.7 shows the hours per year of early childhood education for 3 and 4 year-olds, by percent of extremely needy families.

Exhibit 6.5. Adult Basic Education Hours Offered Annually by Project Sites, by Percent of Extremely Needy Families They Served (1994-95)

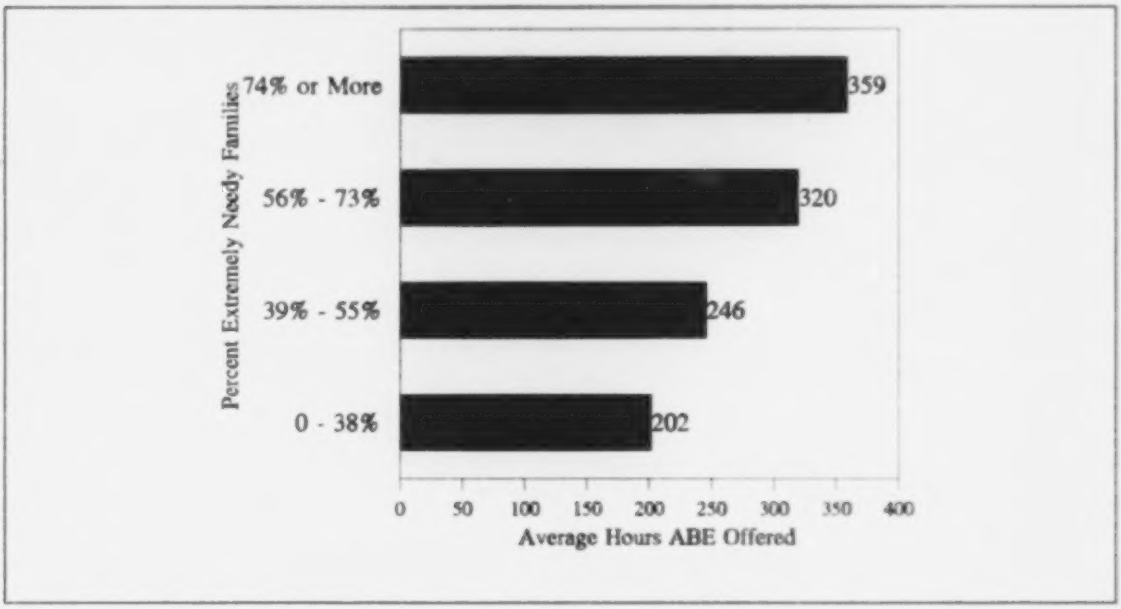

Exhibit reads: Projects where 74 percent or more of families were extremely needy (i.e., had 3 or more need indicators) offered an average of 359 hours of adult basic education services in 1994-95.

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[19] The projects are divided into four groups according to the quartiles on the distribution of "percent of extremely needy families." Thus, each of these groups contains 25 percent of all projects.

Exhibit 6.6. Hours of Parent-Child Joint Activities Offered Annually by Project Sites, by Percent of Extremely Needy Families They Served (1994-95)

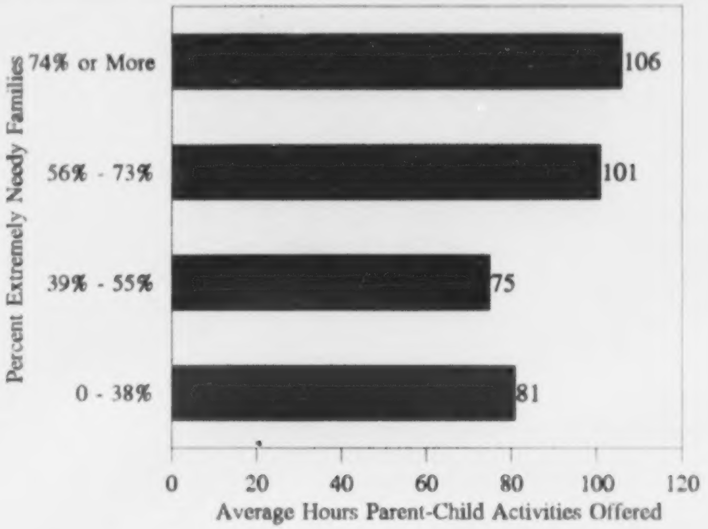

Exhibit reads: Projects where 74 percent or more families were extremely needy (i.e., had 3 or more need indices) offered an average of 106 hours of parent-child joint activities in 1994-95.

Exhibit 6.7. Hours of Early Childhood Education (Ages 3-4) Offered Annually by Project Sites, by Percent of Extremely Needy Families They Served (1994-95)

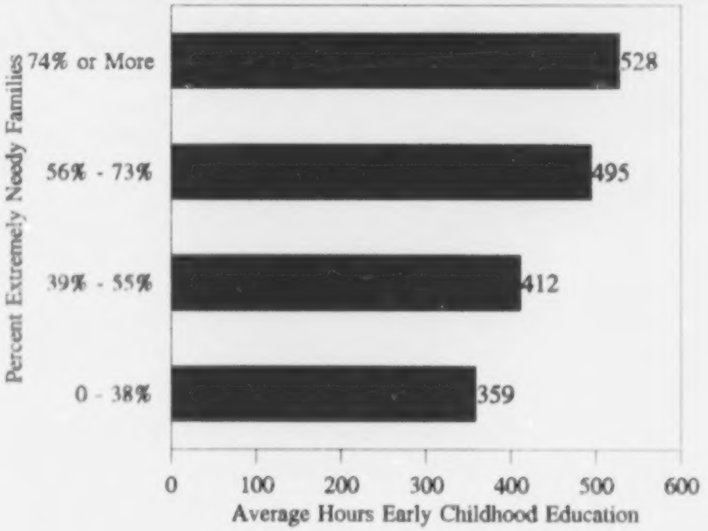

Exhibit reads: Projects where 74 percent or more families were extremely needy (i.e., had 3 or more need indices) offered an average of 528 hours of early childhood education (ages 3-4) in 1994-95.

Thus, while the projects with high percentages of extremely needy families did not, or could not, differ in terms of staffing patterns, the extent and nature of inservice education conducted and the extent of collaboration with other agencies, they did clearly offer far greater numbers of hours of adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education than projects with lower percentages of extremely needy families.

Further, the projects' report of their families' needs for support services closely mirrored the relative percentages of extremely needy families. As part of the assessment of project characteristics, we asked each project how many of their families were in need of various types of support services.[20] Based on projects' responses on families' need for transportation, child care, meals, and nutrition assistance, we created an index of need for "basic support services" by families in each individual project. Similarly, using projects' responses concerning their families' need for housing, health care, mental health, employment assistance, family support, crisis intervention, special care for a person with disabilities, financial assistance, translators, and/or case management, we created an index of need for "referral services."[21]

Projects with high percentages of extremely needy families reported a significantly higher need for basic support services among their families than projects with lower percentages of extremely needy families (12.5 versus 11.7 on a scale of 1-16). Similarly, projects with high percentages of extremely needy families reported a significantly higher need for referral services among their families than projects with lower percentages of needy families (20.9 versus 18.9 on a scale of 1-40). The two measures of family needs, one based on parent and family characteristics and the other based on reports of project characteristics corroborate each other. Further, these results suggest that project staff have an accurate understanding of the levels of need among their participants.

To What Extent Did the Families Most in Need Participate in Even Start Services?

The final, critical issue we examined with regard to the extremely needy families is their pattern of participation in Even Start services. Specifically, we conducted analyses to determine whether the extremely needy families differ from relatively less needy families in terms of the following:

- Hours and months of participation in adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education;

- Likelihood of participating in all three core components;

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[20] See Exhibit 4.25 in Chapter Four for a detailed description of projects' responses to this question.

[21] The two clusters of support services were based on the results of a factor analysis of the 14 support service items. The basic support services index was created by summing projects' ratings across four items, resulting in a scale of 1-16. Similarly, the referral services index was created by summing projects' ratings across ten items, resulting in a scale of 1-40.

- Rates of retention at year end or successful completion of their educational goals; and

- Rates of unsuccessful termination from the program.

For extremely needy families, their hours of participation in adult and parenting education far exceeded the participation levels among less needy families. As indicated in Exhibit 6.5, projects with high percentages of extremely needy families provide significantly more extensive educational services. Although a higher percentage of these families did leave the program without meeting their goals compared to the less needy families, 68 percent of the extremely needy families were still in the program or had successfully completed the program. Considering the levels of need, the findings as a whole hold promise for demonstrating the program's effectiveness over time.

Extent of Participation in Core Components

Families with 5 to 7 need indicators spent significantly more hours in adult and parenting education than families with 3 to 4 need indicators, who in turn, spent more hours than families

Exhibit 6.8. Annual Hours of Participation in Adult and Parenting Education, by Family Need Index (1994-95)

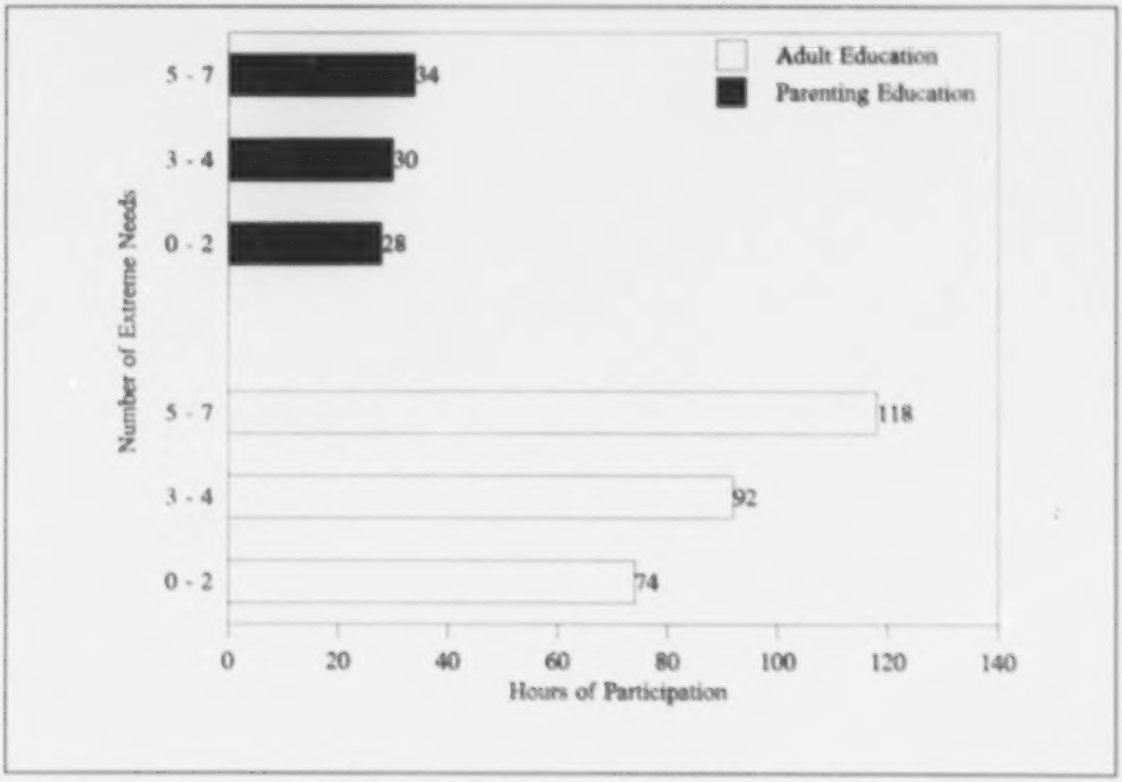

Exhibit reads: Parents who experienced 5-7 types of extreme needs participated in 34 hours of parenting education and 118 hours of adult education in 1994-95.

with 0 to 2 need indicators (see Exhibit 6.8). As reported in Chapter Five, the average hours spent in adult and parenting education were 92 and 30 hours, respectively. Thus, the hours spent by parents from extremely needy families in these activities were considerably greater than the program-wide average.

Children's participation was measured on a scale of 1-4 where: 1=1-3 months; 2=4-6 months; 3=7-9 months; and 4=10-12 months. The number of months of participation by children in the early childhood component was lower among the extremely needy families than the less needy families. Though statistically significant, the averages are not widely different (2.4 versus 2.3), and all represent a range of approximately 6 to 7 months.

Similar results emerged regarding the number of absences from early childhood education (see Exhibit 6.9). The means in this exhibit are based on a scale of 1-4 where: 1=rarely, 2=occasionally, 3=quarter or third of the time, and 4=half the time or more. Thus, smaller means represent less frequent absences.

Exhibit 6.9. Average Measure of Children's Absences, by Family Need Index (1994-95)

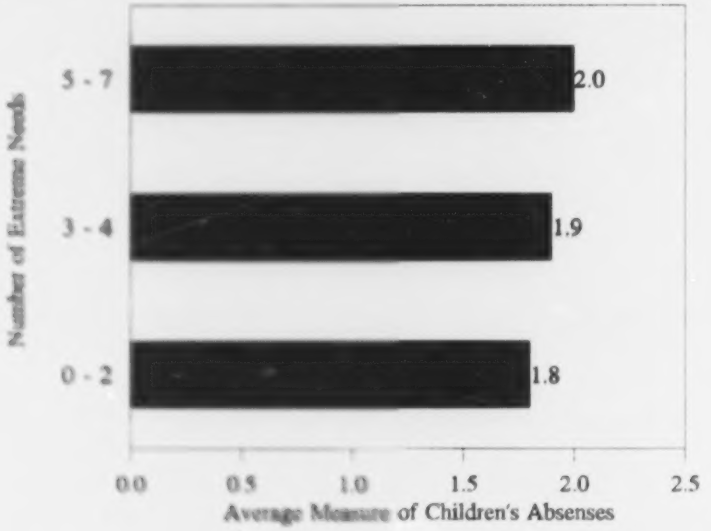

Exhibit reads: Children from families with 5-7 types of extreme needs were absent occasionally (mean of 2) from early childhood education activities during 1994-95.

Even though children from the families with the most extreme needs were absent from early childhood education activities more than children of relatively less needy families, the average of 2 on this measure represents occasional absences. Considering that many of these needy families are headed by single parents, with limited English proficiency, three or more children, and very few financial resources, occasional absences could be seen as a sign of considerable effort to participate.

Finally, we examined the extent to which the extremely needy families were able to participate in all three core components during 1994-95. Eighty-three percent of extremely needy families participated in all core components, while 80-81 percent of less needy families did (see Exhibit 6.10). Although these percentages are not greatly different, the differences are statistically significant.

Exhibit 6.10. Percent of Families Participating in All Three Core Components, by Family Need Index (1994-95)

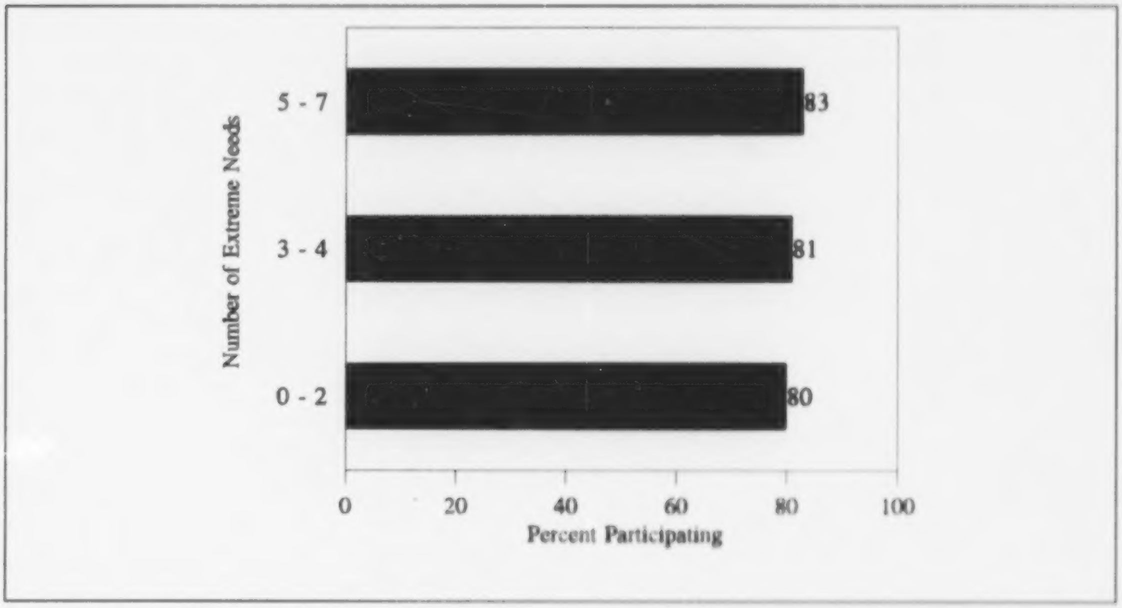

Exhibit reads: 83 percent of families with 5-7 types of extreme needs participated in all three core components in 1994-95.

Year-End Participation Outcomes

We examined the year-end status of the extremely needy families in terms of whether they were still continuing participation and, if not, the reasons for their termination from the program. By the year's end, 68 percent of extremely needy families were retained or had successfully completed the program, compared to 70 percent of families who started with 3 to 4 need indicators and 74 percent of families with 0 to 2 need indicators (see Exhibit 6.11).

Exhibit 6.11. Percent of Families Continuing or Successfully Completed Their Goals at the End of Project Year, by Family Need Index (1994-95)

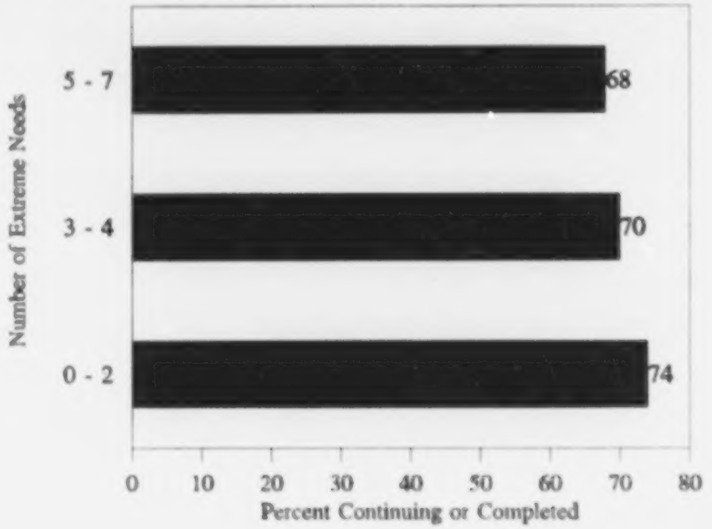

Exhibit reads: 68 percent of families with 5-7 types of extreme needs were continuing participation at year end or had successfully completed their program goals in 1994-95.

Further, the extremely needy families were more likely to terminate for negative reasons such as lack of interest, frequent absences, family problems and crises preventing participation (see Exhibit 6.12). Fifteen percent of extremely needy families and 14 percent of families with 3 to 4 need indicators terminated unsuccessfully, while only 9 percent of families with 0 to 2 need indicators terminated unsuccessfully. (The difference between 14 and 15 percent was not statistically significant; 9 percent was significantly lower than both 14 and 15 percent.)

Exhibit 6.12. Percent of Families With Unsuccessful Termination, by Family Need Index (1994-95)

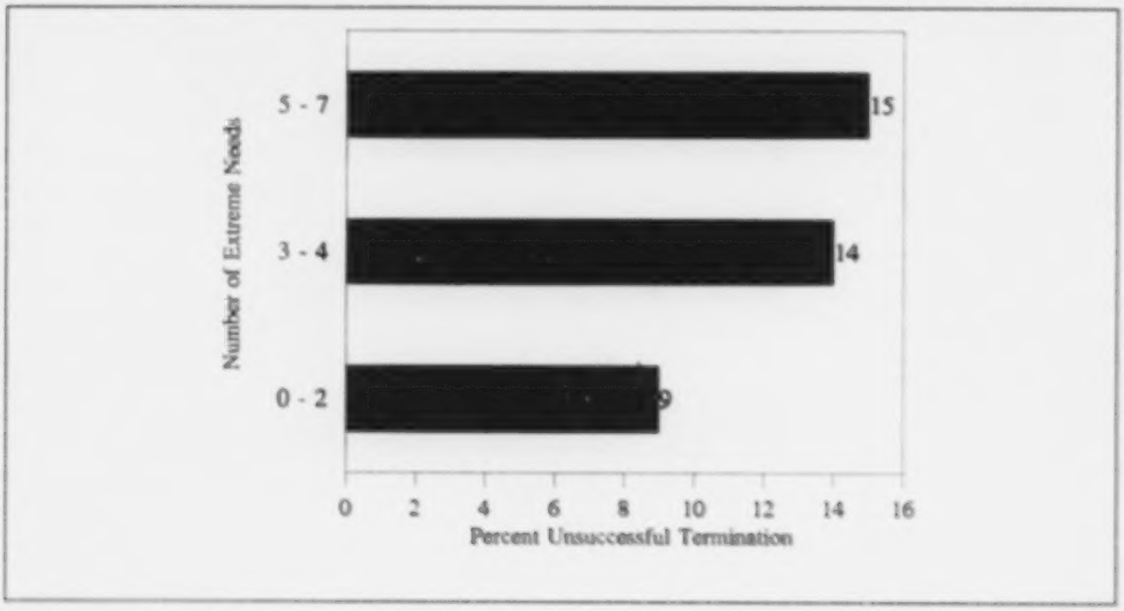

Exhibit reads: 15 percent of families with 5-7 types of extreme needs left Even Start in 1994-95 for reasons such as poor attendance and lack of interest.

A sizable majority (68 percent) of extremely needy families continued to participate at the year's end or had completed their educational goals and left the program. Of these families who continued, it will be important to track their participation patterns in the next two years of evaluation.

157

Chapter Seven

What Were the Educational and Developmental Outcomes of Even Start Participants?

This chapter begins by summarizing the educational and developmental outcomes of Even Start as found in the current study and in the first national evaluation. In the next section we focus on the current study and present a detailed discussion of outcomes for children, followed by outcomes in parenting education, adult education, and other types of progress indicators, such as attainment of a GED and improvement in employment status. The last section returns to data from the first and second evaluations. The section presents a detailed summary of findings to date on the effects of Even Start on children's cognitive development and parents' basic skills development.

Key Findings: Past to Present

Three types of educational/developmental outcomes have been measured in the two national Even Start evaluations: child cognitive development, adult education, and parenting. Children in Even Start achieved significant gains on three different measures of cognitive development (the PSI, PPVT, and PLS-3), gains which were larger than would be expected on the basis of normal development. Children in a randomly assigned control group gained more slowly at first, but caught up once they had their first experience in an organized school setting. Even Start had unequivocally positive effects on attainment of a GED certificate. Adults participating in Even Start also achieved significant gains on the CASAS and TABE tests, gains which are as large as those seen in other studies of low-income populations. However, adults in a randomly assigned control group also achieved gains, where such control group data were available. Finally, Even Start families gained more than expected on a measure of parenting (the HOME Screening Questionnaire).

In the current evaluation, information on educational and developmental outcomes for Even Start participants was collected from about 400 families participating in the 57 projects that are part of the Sample Study (described in more detail in Chapter Two). The data were collected over one program year (representing an average of about seven months of service). The resulting findings should be interpreted as short-term in nature and, as such, should be considered preliminary findings about the effectiveness of Even Start. Projects will repeat the data collection effort at a one-year follow-up for families still participating in the program; these data will represent more long-term program effects.

What Were the Child Development Outcomes?

Two measures of children's development were selected for the current evaluation:

- the PreSchool Inventory (PSI); and
- the Preschool Language Scales (PLS-3).

The PSI was used in the first national evaluation of the Even Start program, and the PLS-3 was chosen for this evaluation to replace the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), which was used in the first evaluation. Each measure is described in more detail below.

The PreSchool Inventory

The PreSchool Inventory (PSI) was developed by Bettye Caldwell as a 64-item inventory of basic concepts important for preschool children to know before entering school (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1970). A 32-item version has been adapted (Abt Associates Inc., 1991) for use in large-scale evaluations.

Description of the Measure

The PSI is an individually administered measure that assesses a range of school readiness skills such as identifying shapes and colors and understanding numerical concepts. The PSI requires 15 minutes to administer and is appropriate for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years. English and Spanish translations of the test are combined on a single form. Each item correct counts as one point, and a total score is computed. The PSI does not contain any subscales.

The 32-item version of the PSI has been used in numerous large-scale evaluation studies including the observation study of Chapter 1 preschool programs (Seppanen et al., 1993), the evaluation of Project Giant Step (Layzer, Goodson, and Layzer, 1990), the National Day Care Study (Bache, 1980), the Head Start Planned Variation study (Walker, Bane, and Bryk 1973), the National Home Start Evaluation (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 1973; 1975), and the Child and Family Resource Program evaluation (Travers et al., 1982).

The PSI was developed to be sensitive to instruction and has shown positive effects of preschool programs in previous research, but it does not have national norms. The psychometric characteristics of the test have been investigated extensively.[22] In the Sample Study, the PSI was administered to children between the ages of 3 and 5 who were expected to participate in early childhood education. The test was administered to children by program staff or staff they designated (e.g., local evaluator, staff from collaborating agency). Project staff were trained to administer the test in the summer of 1994.

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[22] The reliability of the measure has been assessed in each of the studies cited above, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .77 to .87. Test-retest reliability ranged from .67 to .77. In the first Even Start evaluation, the reliability of the PSI, as assessed via Cronbach's alpha, was .86.

Administration rules for the Sample Study were that the test was to be given at entry to Even Start in the fall of 1994 and again in the spring of 1995 (or at the time of exit from Even Start). Project staff were asked to administer the PSI as a pretest within 30 days of the start of services and not to administer the PSI as a posttest unless there were at least three months between pretest and posttest. These were the same rules of administration as used in the first national evaluation. Staff recorded the PSI raw score, the test date, and the language of administration.

Pretest Levels on the PSI

Across 455 children who entered Even Start in the fall of 1994, the mean PSI pretest score was 13.0, with a standard deviation of 6.9 points (Exhibit 7.1). The PSI measures school readiness skills, and so we expect scores to increase as children age. This indeed was the case: Pretest means were 8.2 points for 3-year-olds, 14.4 points for 4-year-olds, and 19.0 points for 5-year-olds. Pretest scores are nearly equivalent for boys and girls in the sample. Children whose parents have a high school diploma or GED had higher pretest scores than children whose parents had less education; however, the small group of children whose parents had some college or a college degree had the lower pretest scores, perhaps because these degrees are from institutions outside of the United States.

Exhibit 7.1.

PSI Pretest Scores
(Raw Score from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Age at pretest			
2 yrs, 10 mos - 3 yrs, 11 mos	162	8.2	5.0
4 yrs, 0 mos - 4 yrs, 11 mos	221	14.4	6.2
5 yrs, 0 mos - 5 yrs, 11 mos	66	19.0	5.2
Over 5 yrs, 11 mos	6	24.3	6.7
Gender			
Male	207	12.8	6.9
Female	209	13.0	7.0
Ethnicity			
African American	97	12.3	7.4
Asian	26	9.0	6.6
Hispanic	167	12.1	6.6
Native American	9	17.9	5.5
White	119	14.9	6.6
Highest grade attained by target parent			
Grade 0-4	24	10.5	5.9
Grade 5-8	74	12.4	6.6
Grade 9-12	230	13.0	7.2
Diploma or GED	31	13.8	7.2
Some college or college degree	21	9.9	6.2
Language of test administration			
English	278	13.6	7.1
Spanish	138	11.9	6.6
English & Spanish	16	11.4	6.1
Total	455	13.0	6.9

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, PSI pretest data were collected on 162 children ranging in age from 2 years, 10 months to 3 years, 11 months. The mean PSI raw score for these children was 8.2 points, with a standard deviation of 5.0 points.

Developing Age Norms for the PSI

If the PSI had national norms, we could estimate the amount of growth expected on the PSI by comparing the pretest-posttest growth of Even Start children with the growth of children nationally. However, no such norms exist for the PSI, and, even if they did, they probably would not be based on a sample of children that adequately represents the Even Start population.

Fortunately, the pretest data collected from the first national Even Start evaluation afforded the opportunity to develop age norms for the PSI **based on data collected on Even Start children**. By definition, the resulting norms are directly applicable to the Even Start population. In brief, the methodology called for administering the PSI to children 3 to 5 years old as they entered Even Start and using these pretest scores to generate a growth curve which represents the developmental expectation for the Even Start population. Additional information on this approach is contained in St. Pierre et al., (1993b) and Murray et al., (1993). To the extent that children entering Even Start have had prior preschool experience, their pretest scores reflect learning obtained through that experience.

Based on this earlier analysis, children in the Even Start population are expected to gain an average of .40 items per month on the PSI, solely on the basis of normal development. Children who are administered the PSI in Spanish are expected to gain an average of .29 items per month. Gains are expressed in terms of number of items per month because children participate in Even Start for different lengths of time (i.e., different numbers of months). We use these developmental expectations in subsequent analyses to determine whether participation in Even Start produced pretest-posttest changes which are greater than what would be expected on the basis of normal development.

Gains on the PSI

Gains from Pretest to Posttest

Data from the Sample Study indicate that Even Start children gained a statistically significant amount on the PSI (see Exhibit 7.2). On average, children gained 5.8 points from pretest to posttest. These gains are larger than those seen among the children in the In-Depth Study component of the first Even Start evaluation, where the program children gained 4.5 from the pretest to first posttest (approximately nine months later) and the control children gained 3.1 points. Another way to interpret the data is to express the size of the gain in terms of standard deviation units. Dividing the gain by the standard deviation of the pretest yields a standardized gain of .90, which is a large gain by general standards of social science evaluations.

Gains per Month

For the children in the Sample Study, the average amount of time between the pretest and the posttest was approximately six months. Dividing individual children's gain by the time between pretest and posttest, we find that the average gain per month for the PSI was .94 items.

Using the information from the "norm development" analyses described earlier, we can estimate that children in the Even Start population ought to gain .40 items per month solely on the basis of normal development. Thus, the observed gain of .94 items per month can be expressed as a combination of .40 items per month due to normal development and .54 items per month due to Even Start. This means that participation in Even Start more than doubles the expected rate of learning on the PSI.

Exhibit 7.2.

Pretest and Posttest Scores on PSI
(Raw Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

	N	Mean	SD
Pretest	322	12.7	6.4
Posttest	322	18.5	6.6
Gain		5.8*	
Standardized Gain		0.90	

*statistically significant, $p<.05$

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 322 children had both pretest and posttest scores on the PSI. Children gained an average of 5.8 points, which translates into an standardized gain of .90 standard deviation units, and which is statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level.

This rate of growth is about the same as that observed in the first Even Start evaluation, where children gained .51 items per month above the expected .40 items per month that one might expect due to maturation alone. The results are also equivalent to the largest gains on the PSI observed in other evaluations of high-quality preschool programs, such as Project Giant Step in New York City, where children gained .58 items per month above an expected .42 items due to maturation (Layzer et al., 1990).

Preschool Language Scale (PLS-3)

The PLS-3 was selected for this evaluation to replace the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) used in the earlier evaluation, in order to obtain more detailed information about children's language development.

Description of the Measure

The PLS-3 was first developed in 1969 to assess the language development of young children, based on information about language development from the fields of psycholinguistics, human development, and speech-language pathology (Zimmerman, Steiner, and Pond, 1992). The measure can be used with children as young as 2 weeks and as old as 7 years of age.

The PLS-3 measures both receptive and expressive language skills and provides scores on two subscales (auditory comprehension and expressive communication) in addition to a total score. The auditory comprehension subscale assesses children's ability to process and understand language that they hear, including skills in the areas of the meaning of words and concepts (content), the structure of language and syntax (form), and integrative thinking skills. The expressive communication subscale evaluates children's ability to produce language, including skills in vocal development, use of words and concepts (content), syntax (form), and integrative thinking skills.

The test used in the Sample Study was a version which was revised in 1992. The test was standardized on a sample of 1,200 children, with equal numbers of males and females within each age range. The nationally representative sample was stratified on the basis of parent education, geographic region, and race.[23] The PLS-3 takes approximately 30 to 40 minutes to administer and is available in both English and Spanish. Raw scores are converted into standard scores based on the age of the child; national norms and age-equivalent scores also are available.

In the Sample Study, the PLS-3 was administered to children who were between the ages of 2 years, 6 months and 5 years, 6 months at the time of the pretest and who were expected to participate in early childhood education. The test was administered to children by program staff or staff they designated (e.g., local evaluator, staff from collaborating agency). Project staff were trained to administer the test in the summer of 1994.

Pretest Levels on the PLS-3

Across 440 children with valid scores on this measure, the average PLS-3 Total Language Score was 89.4 points, with a standard deviation of 17.6 points (Exhibit 7.3). The PLS-3 is normed to have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15, indicating that, on average, children entering Even Start scored about three-quarters of a standard deviation below the mean of the norming sample.

The PLS-3 standard scores are calculated based on the child's age; thus, we would not expect standard scores to increase appreciably as children age. This was the case for children from ages 3 to 5; the small group of children 6 and above had higher scores, but a much larger standard deviation, as might be expected with a sample of only nine children.

Pretest means are also presented for several different subgroups of children. Pretest scores were virtually identical for boys and girls in the sample and for children who were tested in English or Spanish. There does not seem to be a consistent relationship between children's scores and the level of their parent's education.

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[23] Test-retest reliability coefficients range from .82 to .94, depending on the subscale and the age of the child. The interrater reliability was found to be .89. Reliability coefficients in this range are considered to be quite good.

Exhibit 7.3.

PLS-3 Pretest Scores
(Total Language Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Age at pretest			
2 yrs, 10 mos - 3 yrs, 11 mos	177	88.7	16.5
4 yrs, 0 mos - 4 yrs, 11 mos	175	88.8	18.0
5 yrs, 0 mos - 5 yrs, 11 mos	62	88.6	15.4
Over 5 yrs, 11 mos	9	119.3	24.6
Gender			
Male	212	89.6	18.3
Female	214	89.4	17.3
Ethnicity			
African American	113	88.2	17.5
Asian	31	81.9	23.0
Hispanic	166	99.0	16.4
Native American	10	93.3	13.1
White	107	92.3	18.0
Highest grade attained by target parent			
Grade 0-4	23	92.0	19.8
Grade 5-8	87	93.2	20.6
Grade 9-12	232	89.6	16.8
Diploma or GED	33	86.5	12.6
Some college or college degree	24	81.7	11.1
Language of test administration			
English	282	89.5	18.3
Spanish	153	89.6	16.5
Total	440	89.4	17.6

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, PLS-3 total language pretest data were collected on 177 children ranging in age from 2 years, 10 months to 3 years, 11 months. The mean PLS total language score for these children was 88.7 points, with a standard deviation of 16.5 points.

Gains on the PLS-3

Gains from Pretest to Posttest

Data from the Sample Study indicate that Even Start children gain a statistically significant amount on language skills as measured by the PLS-3 (see Exhibit 7.4). Children gained an average of 4.7 points in auditory comprehension and 4.2 points in expressive communication between pretest and posttest. On the total language score, children gained an average of 5.2 points.

Exhibit 7.4.

Pretest and Posttest Scores on PLS-3
(Standard Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

		Pretest		Posttest			
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Gain	Std. Gain
Auditory Comprehension	355	88.6	14.5	93.3	13.8	4.7*	.32
Expressive Communication	355	89.6	14.9	93.9	15.2	4.2*	.28
Total Language	355	87.8	14.8	93.0	14.6	5.2*	.35

* Statistically significant, p<.05
Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 355 children had both pretest and posttest scores on the PLS. Children gained an average of 5.2 points on the total language scale, which translates into a standardized gain of .35 standard deviation units, and which is statistically significant at the p<.05 level.

Another way to interpret the data is to express the size of the gain in terms of standard deviation units. Dividing the gain by the standard deviation of the pretest yields a standardized gain of .32 for auditory comprehension; .28 for expressive communication; and .35 for total language. These would be considered "moderate" gains in social science evaluations.

Gains per Month

For the children in the Sample Study, the average gain per month is .77 points for auditory language; .78 points for expressive communication; and .89 points for total language over the six months between pretest and posttest (see Exhibit 7.5). Since this measure was not used in previous Even Start evaluations, we do not have a point of comparison for these figures. However, the gains per month for various subgroups of children will be discussed further in Chapter Eight of this report.

Exhibit 7.5.

Gain Per Month on the PLS-3
(Standard Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

	N	Gain per Month
Auditory Comprehension	355	.77
Expressive Communication	355	.78
Total Language	355	.89

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 355 children had both a pretest and posttest on the PLS-3. The average child gained .89 items per month on the total language scale.

Gains Related to National Norms

Unlike the PSI, there are national norms for scores on the PLS-3 which can be used to gauge the gains achieved by Even Start children. As is the case with most standardized tests, the norms are based on a nationally representative sample of children, with representation from various economic and education groups. Thus, the norming sample likely includes more children from middle and upper income families and families where parents have more education than is the case among the Even Start population. Nevertheless, the norms are useful to compare Even Start children to a group with both disadvantaged and advantaged children.

The norms are constructed so that, at any age level, the mean is 100 standard score points with a standard deviation of 15. Even Start children had an average total language standard score of 87.8 at pretest (Exhibit 7.6). This is 12.2 points (.81 standard deviation units) below the national norm. However, at the posttest Even Start children had an average total language standard score of 93.0. This is 7.0 points (.47 standard deviation units) below the national norm. The same pattern is seen for the auditory comprehension and expressive communication subscales.

These results indicate that the auditory and expressive language scores of children who participated in Even Start for a school year increased when compared to the national norms--the discrepancy between the standard scores of Even Start children and the standard scores of children in the national norms group was cut in half between pretest and posttest, and Even Start children moved, on average, from the 21st percentile to the 32nd percentile of the norms group.

Exhibit 7.6.

Age-Equivalent Scores on PLS-3 at Pretest and Posttest (Raw Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

Subscale	N	Mean Raw Score	Actual Age	Age Equivalent	Difference
Auditory Comprehension					
Pretest	3	21.3	2-4 to 2-5	2-1	-3 mos
	22	24.2	2-6 to 2-11	2-5	-1
	67	26.5	3-0 to 3-5	2-7	-5
	60	29.9	3-6 to 3-11	3-0	-6
	77	34.5	4-0 to 4-5	3-5	-7
	67	37.4	4-6 to 4-11	3-10	-8
	55	40.6	5-0 to 5-11	4-6	-6
	3	42.7	6-0 to 6-11	4-11	-13
Posttest	4	28.5	2-6 to 2-11	2-10	+4 mos
	22	28.4	3-0 to 3-5	2-10	-2
	65	32.7	3-6 to 3-11	3-4	-2
	60	37.0	4-0 to 4-5	3-10	-2
	79	39.7	4-6 to 4-11	4-3	-3
	102	42.1	5-0 to 5-11	4-8	-4
(Continues on next page)	20	43.8	6-0 to 6-11	5-4	-8

Exhibit 7.6. (continued)

Age-Equivalent Scores on PLS-3 at Pretest and Posttest (Raw Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

Subscale	N	Mean Raw Score	Actual Age	Age Equivalent	Difference
Expressive Communication					
Pretest	3	20.7	2-4 to 2-5	2-4	0 mos.
	21	22.5	2-6 to 2-11	2-5	-1
	67	24.3	3-0 to 3-5	2-8	-4
	61	28.0	3-6 to 3-11	3-1	-5
	77	32.3	4-0 to 4-5	3-6	-6
	67	35.7	4-6 to 4-11	3-11	-7
	55	41.0	5-0 to 5-11	4-8	-4
	3	40.7	6-0 to 6-11	4-8	-16
Posttest	4	26.0	2-6 to 2-11	2-10	+4 mos.
	22	26.0	3-0 to 3-5	2-10	-2
	64	29.0	3-6 to 3-11	3-2	-4
	61	35.1	4-0 to 4-5	3-10	-2
	78	38.1	4-6 to 4-11	4-2	-4
	102	42.3	5-0 to 5-11	4-10	-2
	20	42.4	6-0 to 6-11	4-10	-14

What Were the Parenting Education Outcomes?

Outcomes for parenting education were assessed by the HOME Screening Questionnaire (HSQ), which replaced the set of questions about parent-child activities and the home environment contained in the first Even Start evaluation. The parent-child interview used in the first study suffered from high pretest means on some subscales and small gains on most subscales. Although the interview from the first evaluation was based on three key measures including the HOME, staff identified questions that required rewording and asked for guidelines for excluding families based on the age of the child. The quality of local administration in that evaluation was highly variable. Given these problems, and based on recommendations from the first Even Start evaluation's Advisory Panel, we decided to assess parenting skills by replacing the questions used in the first evaluation with the HOME Screening Questionnaire.

HOME Screening Questionnaire

The HOME Screening Questionnaire is a survey version of the Home Observations Measure of the Environment (HOME), which can be administered either in the home or in a center. The HSQ covers many of the same topics as the HOME but gathers data through parent self-report rather than direct observation.

Description of the Measure

The Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME: Caldwell and Bradley, 1984) is an accepted measure of the quality of cognitive stimulation and emotional support provided to the child by the family. The HOME is completed based on observation of the home environment, with some open-ended interview items. It has been used in numerous large-scale research studies and has been shown to be related to concurrent child performance on standardized cognitive measures and to predict later academic performance. Psychometric analyses show that the HOME has adequate reliability. The HOME is filled out during a visit to each family's residence and requires over an hour to complete.

Researchers at the University of Colorado Medical School developed the HOME Screening Questionnaire in an effort to offer a briefer instrument that taps similar constructs with simpler data collection requirements. The HSQ (Coons et al, 1981) is a parent-answered questionnaire written at a third or fourth grade level. It consists of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and yes/no questions. The questionnaire takes 15-20 minutes to complete. The HSQ scoring was standardized on a sample of 1,500 low-income families. Psychometric studies have shown that the HSQ is highly correlated with the HOME total score.[24]

Two forms of the HSQ are available, based on the age of the child: birth up to 3 years of age; and 3 to 6 years of age. The instrument for younger children has 30 items and a toy list, while the instrument for older children has 34 items and a toy list. An administration manual provides rules for scoring each item to yield a total score. Total scores range from 0 to 43 on the form for younger children and 0 to 56 on the form for older children. Both forms were translated into Spanish by Abt staff.

In the Sample Study, the HSQ was administered to parents by Even Start staff. The questions were asked in reference to **one** child in the family; if more than one child were expected to participate in Even Start, staff were instructed to select the child expected to have the greatest involvement in the program. Project staff were trained on the HSQ during the summer of 1994. A total score was calculated and used in the analyses reported here; information on individual item scores was not obtained.

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[24] Test-retest correlations for the HSQ over the two weeks time range from .62 to .86 with internal consistency coefficients between .74 and .80 (Frankenburg and Coons, 1986).

Pretest Levels on the HSQ

For the 137 parents of children less than 3 years of age in the Sample Study, the average pretest on the 0-3 version of the HSQ was 28.2, with a standard deviation of 5.6 (see Exhibit 7.7). Pretest means increase as the education level of the parent goes up, from 25.8 for parents with less than a fifth grade education to 30.3 for parents with a high school diploma or GED certificate. The average scores also were higher for parents whose primary language is English (29.8) than for parents whose first language is not English (25.7).

Exhibit 7.7.

HOME Screening Questionnaire Pretest Scores for Parents of Children Less than Three Years of Age (Raw Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Highest grade at intake			
Grade 0-4	8	25.8	5.1
Grade 5-8	26	27.9	5.3
Grade 9-12	75	28.7	5.3
HS Diploma or GED	7	30.3	7.1
Primary Language is English			
Yes	79	29.8	5.2
No	39	25.7	4.7
Gender			
Male	7	29.7	5.5
Female	112	28.4	5.4
Ethnicity			
African American	33	27.3	4.9
Asian	9	23.7	4.4
Hispanic	31	26.7	4.6
Native American	2	34.0	1.4
White	42	31.5	5.0
Total	137	28.2	5.7

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, HSQ's were completed on 137 families with children less than three years of age at pretest. The average pretest score was 28.2, with a standard deviation of 5.7 in 1994-95.

A larger group (438) completed the HSQ about a child between 3 and 6 years of age. Among this group, the average pretest score was 35.0, with a standard deviation of 7.4 (see Exhibit 7.8). Similar patterns are seen as with the HSQ for younger children: parents with more education and parents whose primary language is English tend to score higher on the measure.

Exhibit 7.8.

Home Screening Questionnaire Pretest Scores for Parents of Children Three to Six Years Old (Raw Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Highest grade at intake			
Grade 0-4	23	30.9	6.2
Grade 5-8	75	32.6	7.4
Grade 9-12	221	34.9	6.9
HS Diploma or GED	33	35.9	6.6
Primary Language is English			
Yes	233	35.8	7.2
No	149	32.3	6.4
Gender			
Male	24	38.0	8.7
Female	362	34.4	7.0
Ethnicity			
African American	98	33.3	7.6
Asian	32	34.1	5.4
Hispanic	144	32.6	6.6
Native American	5	41.8	8.9
White	102	38.1	6.1
Total	438	35.0	7.4

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, HSQ's were completed on 438 families with children between three and six years of age at pretest. The average pretest score was 35.0, with a standard deviation of 7.4.

Gains on the HSQ

Gains from Pretest to Posttest

There were significant gains from pretest to posttest on the HSQ on both versions of the measure (see Exhibit 7.9). The average time between pretest and posttest was approximately six months. Among parents whose children were less than 3 years old, there was a gain of 3.5 points from pretest to posttest, corresponding to a standardized gain of .60. A similar gain of 3.4 points was seen for parents of older children, which corresponds to a standardized gain of .48. These gains are considered moderate for the social sciences.

Exhibit 7.9.

Pretest and Posttest Scores on the HSQ
(Raw Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

Version of the HSQ	N	Pretest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest Mean	Posttest SD	Gain	Std. Gain
0-3 years	55	29.2	5.8	32.7	5.6	3.5*	.60
3-6 years	252	34.6	7.0	38.0	6.8	3.4*	.48

*statistically significant, $p<.05$

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 55 families with children ages 0-3 had both pretest and posttest scores on the HSQ. These families gained an average of 3.5 points on the HSQ, which translates into a standardized gain of .60 standard deviation units, and which is statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level.

Gains Relative to Other Studies

The gains on the HSQ are encouraging, with larger standardized gains than were generally seen for the parent-child items in the earlier Even Start evaluation. Though there is no control group or norms group for the HSQ, one way to assess the size of these gains is by comparing them to the gains observed for the control group in a separate, ongoing evaluation of a very large demonstration program for low-income families. The Comprehensive Child Development Program (CCDP) is a family-support, two-generation program supported with federal funds from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. As part of the national CCDP evaluation, the HSQ was administered to a sample of low-income control group parents when their children were 18 and 30 months of age. In the control group, there was virtually no change over a one-year period, with the average score at 18 months at 20.9 and the average score at 30 months at 20.2. These data show that we might not expect to find any "normal or developmental" growth over time in the HSQ scores of low-income families, and suggest that the changes seen in the HSQ scores of Even Start families may be due to the program rather than to other factors.

What Were the Adult Education Outcomes?

Projects in the Sample Study had the choice of administering the CASAS or the TABE as a measure of adult math and reading skills. Projects could choose one test for all of their students, based on a match between the test and the orientation of their adult education program (e.g., CASAS for functional literacy programs or TABE for academic or GED preparation), or could administer different tests to different students based on their skill levels (CASAS for lower level students, TABE for more advanced students).

Giving projects the option to administer the TABE instead of the CASAS is a change from the earlier Even Start evaluation. In addition, projects administered both the reading and math tests of each series. Only the CASAS reading test was used in the first evaluation.

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System

The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) is an adult-oriented functional assessment system that measures a broad range of adult literacy skills and their application in real-life domains including consumer economics, government and law, occupational knowledge, community resources, and health (Rickard et al., 1990). For this evaluation, projects administered the Life Skills tests in both reading and math.

Description of the Measure

The CASAS has the flexibility to measure participants involved in diverse adult education programs, spanning the range from non-readers to adults at the high school level. An untimed paper-and-pencil test, each CASAS Life Skills test may take as long as 60 minutes to complete. The CASAS has been used with adult education learners in 27 states. The test is used in adult education and job training programs with both native and non-native English speakers. The CASAS is being used in the National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs (Development Associates, 1992), in the evaluation of California's GAIN program (CASAS, 1990), and in the evaluation of California's 321 adult education programs (CASAS, 1991).

CASAS scores range from 150 to 260. Scale scores link the levels into a continuous scale of achievement. The test developers suggest the following interpretation of CASAS scale scores:

- **Beginning literacy (below 200)**: Adults scoring below a scale score of 200 have difficulty with the basic literacy skills needed to function in an employment setting and in the community. While these adults can handle routine, entry-level jobs, they may have trouble following simple directions and safety procedures.

- **Basic literacy (200 through 214)**: Adults scoring between scale scores 200 and 214 can function in entry-level jobs that require only minimal literacy skills. They can complete simple application forms.

- **Intermediate literacy (215 through 224)**: Adults scoring between scale scores 215 and 224 are able to perform basic literacy tasks in an employment setting. They are generally able to function in jobs or job training that involves following written instructions and diagrams, though they usually have trouble following complex sets of directions.

- **High school literacy (225 and above)**: Adults scoring above a scale score of 224 can usually perform work that involves written directions in familiar and some unfamiliar situations. They can generally function at a high school entry level in basic reading. If they do not have a high school diploma, they can benefit from instruction in GED classes and have a high probability of passing the GED test in a short time.

Sticht (1990) found these interpretations to be reasonable and reported general correspondence between CASAS scale scores above 225 and the ninth- to twelfth-grade reading levels on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and the Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE).

There is only minimal data on the psychometric characteristics of the CASAS. A correlation of .70 between the CASAS reading test and the ABLE was reported in unpublished data. In the earlier Even Start evaluation, using data from the NEIS, an estimate of test-retest reliability was calculated using the correlation between pretest and posttest scores for adults who were posttested less than 90 days after the pretest. The correlation was .86, suggesting that the CASAS is a reliable measure. The true test-retest reliability might be even higher since this estimate is based on data using alternate forms of CASAS tests.

In the Sample Study, Even Start staff administered the CASAS Life Skills tests in reading and math. Each test has four levels, A through D, with 24 to 40 items per level and alternate forms of each level. Staff administered a short "appraisal" test to assist in identifying the appropriate level of the CASAS. There is no Spanish version of the CASAS, and project staff were instructed to administer the sample items on the appraisal test to determine whether adults had enough ability in reading English to take the test. If an adult was not given the test due to limited English proficiency, this was noted on the ESIS form.

Pretest Levels on the CASAS

The average pretest scale score on the CASAS reading test was 226.3, with a standard deviation of 18.2 (see Exhibit 7.10). This score corresponds to a high school level of functional literacy and is comparable to the average baseline score from the first national Even Start evaluation. Pretest means increase as the education level of the parent goes up, from 185.8 for parents with less than a fifth grade education to 230.6 for parents with some high school. The small group with a high school diploma or GED certificate scored slightly lower than those with some high school education. Parents whose primary language is English had average scores nearly two standard deviations higher than those whose primary language is not English (232.1 versus 207.6).

The average pretest score on the CASAS math test was lower than for the reading, at 217.8 with a standard deviation of 13.9 (see Exhibit 7.11). This score corresponds to an intermediate level of functional skills, indicating that the average Even Start adult's math skills are below the high school level at entry to the program. Similar to reading scores, math scores increased with higher education levels, from an average score of 185.8 for the small group of adults with less than a fifth grade education to 218.2 for those with a high school education. Those with a high school diploma or GED certificate scored about a half a standard deviation higher than those with a ninth to twelfth grade education (224 versus 218), suggesting that the additional education makes more of a difference in math than in reading skills. There is less of a difference in math scores between those whose primary language is English (219.3) or not (210.2).

Exhibit 7.10.

CASAS Reading Pretest Scores
(Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Highest grade at intake			
Grade 0-4	5	185.8	14.2
Grade 5-8	17	218.7	20.9
Grade 9-12	81	230.6	12.0
HS Diploma or GED	17	226.4	24.9
Primary Language is English			
Yes	109	232.1	13.5
No	28	207.6	19.0
Gender			
Male	8	218.0	22.8
Female	129	227.3	17.7
Ethnicity			
African American	21	224.6	13.6
Asian	27	228.9	16.0
Hispanic	22	211.0	22.9
Native American	6	231.5	12.6
White	61	232.5	14.6
Total	146	226.3	18.6

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, the CASAS reading scale was completed by 146 adults at pretest. The average pretest score was 226.3, with a standard deviation of 18.6.

Exhibit 7.11.

CASAS Math Pretest Scores
(Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Highest grade at intake			
Grade 0-4	4	185.8	16.5
Grade 5-8	14	212.3	15.2
Grade 9-12	74	218.2	11.2
HS Diploma or GED	14	224.4	16.4
Primary Language is English			
Yes	101	219.3	12.8
No	22	210.2	16.5
Gender			
Male	3	225.7	8.5
Female	119	217.5	14.1
Ethnicity			
African American	20	211.0	15.5
Asian	27	222.0	13.8
Hispanic	17	210.2	15.6
Native American	5	218.4	8.7
White	54	220.4	11.7
Total	126	217.8	13.9

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, the CASAS math scale was completed by 126 adults at pretest. The average pretest score was 217.8, with a standard deviation of 13.9.

Gains on the CASAS

Gains from Pretest to Posttest

Adults who took the CASAS reading test at both pretest and posttest gained an average of 4.9 scale score points (see Exhibit 7.12), equivalent to a gain of .28 standard deviation units. Additionally, adults in the Sample Study gained an average of 6.7 points on the math test from the pretest to the posttest approximately seven months later. These gains are nearly half of a standard deviation in size, larger than the gain seen for reading, although as noted above, initial scores were lower for the math test, allowing more room for change.

Exhibit 7.12.

Pretest and Posttest Scores on the CASAS
(Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

		Pretest		Posttest			
Test	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Gain**	**Std. Gain**
Reading	85	227.7	18.0	232.6	16.4	4.9*	.28
Math	77	217.8	13.9	224.5	16.2	6.7*	.49

*statistically significant, p<.05

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 85 adults reported both pretest and posttest scores on the CASAS reading scale. These adults gained an average of 4.9 points on the CASAS, which translates into a standardized gain of .28 standard deviation units, and which is statistically significant at the p<.05 level.

When the scaled scores in reading are translated into literacy levels (see Exhibit 7.13), we see that the majority of adults (64 percent) were at the high school level at both the pretest and posttest. However, there was some movement at the lower levels. For example, approximately 11 percent of adults moved from an intermediate level of literacy at the pretest to the high school level at the posttest, and 8 percent moved from the basic literacy level to the intermediate level.

Exhibit 7.13.

Pretest and Posttest Literacy Levels on CASAS Reading
(Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

	Percent of Adults by Literacy Level (n=85)			
	Posttest			
Pretest	**Beginning**	**Basic**	**Intermediate**	**High School**
Beginning	4.7%	2.4%	--	--
Basic	--	2.4%	8.2%	1.2%
Intermediate	--	--	5.9%	10.6%
High School	--	--	1.2%	63.5%

Exhibit reads: 10.6 percent of the adults who took the CASAS reading test in 1994-95 moved from the "intermediate" literacy level at pretest to the "high school" literacy level at posttest.

The levels of math literacy at pretest and posttest are shown in Exhibit 7.14. Only about a third of the adults scored at the high school level at both the pretest and posttest. Approximately 9 percent of adults moved from a basic to an intermediate level of proficiency, and 23 percent moved from intermediate to high school levels in math.

Exhibit 7.14.

Pretest and Posttest Literacy Levels on CASAS Math
(Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

	Percent of Adults by Literacy Level (n=85)			
	Posttest			
Pretest	**Beginning**	**Basic**	**Intermediate**	**High School**
Beginning	7.8%	1.3%	--	--
Basic	2.6%	10.4%	9.1%	2.6%
Intermediate	--	1.3%	7.8%	23.4%
High School	--	--	1.3%	32.5%

Exhibit reads: 23.4 percent of the adults who took the CASAS math test in 1994-95 moved from the "intermediate" literacy level at pretest to the "high school" literacy level at posttest.

Gains Relative to Other Studies

The magnitude of the adult literacy gains in the Sample Study are comparable to gains seen among other adult education programs. The gain of 4.9 points on the CASAS reading test is larger than the gain of 3.6 points seen at the first follow-up on the earlier Even Start evaluation. It is nearly four times larger than the 1.2 point gain seen among the control group in the In-Depth Study from the earlier evaluation.

When translated into standard deviation units, .28 in reading for the Sample Study is comparable to the .26 seen with the NEIS data from the first evaluation. However, the analytic sample for the first evaluation was restricted to adults with at least 70 hours of instruction, which was not the case for the Sample Study due to the small sample sizes. The standardized gain for the Sample Study also is equivalent to the gains reported in other adult education evaluations using the CASAS. For example, in an evaluation of federally funded adult education programs in California, researchers found average gains of 3.0 scaled score points and a standardized gain of .20 (CASAS, 1992) when adults were tested after 80 to 100 hours of instruction.

Tests of Adult Basic Education

Description of the Measure

The Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) are norm-referenced assessments designed to measure achievement in reading, mathematics, language, and spelling. The test items are written to reflect language and content appropriate for adults and to measure the understanding and applications of conventions and principles commonly taught in adult basic education curricula (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1987). The test has been normed on a sample of adults representing participants in adult basic education programs, postsecondary vocational-technical schools, juvenile correctional facilities, and adult correctional institutions. There are four overlapping levels of the test:

- E (Easy) corresponding to grade levels 2.6 through 4.9;
- M (Medium) corresponding to grade levels 4.6 through 6.9;
- D (Difficult) corresponding to grade levels 6.6 through 8.9; and
- A (Advanced) corresponding to grade levels 8.6 through 12.9.

In the Sample Study, projects administered only the reading and mathematics tests of the TABE. The reading test assesses:

- vocabulary (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, words in context, meaning of prefixes and suffixes); and

- comprehension (e.g., extracting details from text, analyzing characters, identifying main ideas, and interpreting events).

The mathematics test measures:

- computation (e.g., addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and percents); and

- concepts and applications (e.g. , numeration, problem solving, measurement, and geometry).

There are two parallel forms for each level of the test. There also is a complete battery as well as a shorter survey version of the tests. The complete battery provides scores in each subtest (e.g., vocabulary and comprehension) as well as a total score; the survey form provides only total scores for each test (e.g., reading and mathematics). Both tests are scored on the same scale, with scores ranging from approximately 450 to 865.

The TABE is a timed test. For the complete battery, the reading tests take approximately an hour and the math tests are allotted about 90 minutes. The reading and math survey forms have about half of the items of the full battery tests and take about 30 minutes each. Prior to taking either the full battery or the survey form, students are given a locator test to determine the appropriate level of the tests to be administered.

In the Sample Study, Even Start staff or staff at collaborating agencies administered the TABE reading and math tests. They had the choice of the full battery or the survey form. The TABE was administered in English. Project staff were instructed to administer the sample items on the locator test to determine whether adults had enough ability in reading English to take the test. If an adult was not given the test due to limited English proficiency, this was noted on the ESIS form.

Pretest Levels on the TABE

The average pretest scale score on the TABE reading test was 717.8, with a standard deviation of 87.7 (see Exhibit 7.15). This score corresponds to about the end of fifth-grade reading level. Pretest means increase as the education level of the parent goes up, from 578.5 for parents with less than a fifth-grade education to 728.7 for parents with some high school. As was seen with the CASAS, the small group with a high school diploma or GED certificate scored slightly lower than those with some high school education. Parents whose primary language is English had average scores that were only about a quarter of a standard deviation higher than those whose primary language is not English (720.9 versus 697.5).

The average pretest score on the TABE math test was almost equivalent to the reading, at 716.5 with a standard deviation of 93.7 (see Exhibit 7.16). Similar to reading scores, math scores increased with higher education levels, from an average score of 583.5 for adults with less than a fifth-grade education to 729.3 for those with some high school education. Again, those with a high school diploma or GED certificate scored slightly below those with a ninth- to twelfth-grade education (729 versus 690). The small group of adults whose primary language is not English scored about the same as adults whose primary language is English (719.9 versus 716.7).

Gains on the TABE

Gains from Pretest to Posttest

The sample of adults who took the TABE reading test at both pretest and posttest gained an average of 33.7 scale score points (see Exhibit 7.17). This is a statistically significant difference over the approximately seven months between pretest and posttest. These gains are about the same magnitude as those seen on the CASAS, corresponding to a standardized gain of .32 standard deviation units.

As Exhibit 7.17 shows, adults in the Sample Study gained an average of 28.2 points on the TABE math test from the pretest to the posttest, approximately seven months later. This corresponds to .25 standard deviation units, which is a smaller gain than that seen for the CASAS math scores.

Gains Related to National Norms

The national norms on the TABE can be used to provide information about how the reading and math scores of Even Start adults compare to other students in adult education programs. In particular, TABE scaled scores can be translated into grade equivalent scores, which have been obtained by calibrating the TABE scores to the norming sample for California Achievement Test CAT) used with children in elementary and secondary grades. Thus, a grade equivalent score on the TABE of 6.8 means that the test taker's performance is equivalent to the typical CAT performance of students who have completed eight months of the sixth grade.

Exhibit 7.15.

TABE Reading Pretest Scores
(Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Highest grade at intake			
Grade 0-4	2	578.5	102.5
Grade 5-8	43	724.5	85.9
Grade 9-12	208	728.7	79.7
HS Diploma or GED	25	696.0	119.1
Primary Language is English			
Yes	271	720.9	90.5
No	17	697.5	64.7
Gender			
Male	18	739.9	46.3
Female	270	718.5	91.1
Ethnicity			
African American	158	699.7	99.4
Asian	4	692.5	42.3
Hispanic (only administered in English)	na	na	na
Native American	2	734.0	52.3
White	101	751.9	68.6
Total	321	717.8	87.7

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, the TABE reading scale was completed by 321 adults at pretest. The pretest score was 717.8, with a standard deviation of 87.7.

Exhibit 7.16.

TABE Math Pretest Scores
(Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Highest grade at intake			
Grade 0-4	2	583.5	92.6
Grade 5-8	44	713.8	90.2
Grade 9-12	197	729.3	84.1
HS Diploma or GED	25	690.6	127.9
Primary Language is English			
Yes	262	716.7	97.6
No	16	719.9	58.0
Gender			
Male	17	749.8	38.8
Female	261	715.3	97.7
Ethnicity			
African American	152	701.5	107.4
Asian	3	745.7	36.9
Hispanic	19	725.9	54.0
Native American	2	618.5	227.0
White	99	738.9	74.7
Total	311	716.5	93.7

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, the TABE math scale was completed by 311 adults at pretest. The average pretest score was 716.5, with a standard deviation of 93.7.

Exhibit 7.17.

Pretest and Posttest Scores on the TABE
(Scaled Scores from the Sample Study, 1994-95)

Test		Pretest		Posttest			
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Gain	Std. Gain
Reading	125	688.2	105.4	721.9	86.5	33.7*	.32
Math	118	689.4	112.7	717.6	102.5	28.2*	.25

*statistically significant, $p<.05$

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 125 adults had both pretest and posttest scores on the TABE reading scale. These adults gained an average of 33.7 points on the TABE, which translates into a standardized gain of .32 standard deviation units, and which is statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level.

To look at the grade equivalent scores of the Even Start adults, we split the sample at pretest and posttest into quartiles and computed the grade equivalent scores of students at the 25th, 50th and 75th percentile. As Exhibit 7.18 shows, the scores of students at the 50th percentile (i.e., the median) on the reading test at pretest correspond to a grade equivalent of 5.9; by posttest, students at the median had a 7.9 grade equivalent score.

Exhibit 7.18.

Grade Equivalent Scores Corresponding to TABE Reading and Math Quartiles
at Pretest and Posttest (1994-95)

Quartile by Test	Pretest		Posttest	
	Scale Score	Grade Equiv.	Scale Score	Grade Equiv.
Reading				
25%	650	3.1	684	4.2
50% (median)	722	5.9	750	7.9
75%	766	9.3	785	12.9+
Math				
25%	652	3.3	687	4.2
50% (median)	733	6.1	756	7.5
75%	761	7.8	789	10.9

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, the median TABE reading score was 722 at pretest and 750 at posttest. This corresponds to grade equivalent scores of 5.9 (at pretest) and 7.9 (at posttest).

Similar growth was evidenced for the math test. In general, for the reading and math tests, students at the median gained about two grade levels from pretest to posttest, while students at the 75th percentile gained three grade levels over the same seven months.

What Were the Outcomes on Other Progress Indicators?

In addition to tests and interviews, this evaluation collected information about adults' progress in education, employment, and other credentials such as obtaining a driver's license and U.S. citizenship. This information is available for both the Universe Study and the Sample Study. In this section, we present findings on progress made on these indicators and, where comparable data are available, compare these results to progress reported in the earlier Even Start evaluation.

Attainment of a GED Certificate

Description of the Measure

Receiving the GED certificate is a goal for many participants in adult education programs including Even Start. However, many project staff pointed out that the GED may be an unreasonable or unattainable goal for many adults with low-level skills. Through the ESIS, projects provided information not only about the number of adults who attained the GED certificate, but also about the number working towards that goal. This is more detailed information than was obtained in the first national Even Start evaluation.

Changes in GED Attainment

Approximately half of the adults in both the Universe Study and the Sample Study are currently working toward the GED certificate (Exhibit 7.19). However, the percentage of adults in the Sample Study who received the GED during the program year is three times that of the Universe Study (24.4 percent versus 8.2 percent, based on the sample of adults who did not have a high school diploma or GED at the beginning of the Even Start project year). It is not obvious why we would see this difference, because the Sample Study sites were selected to be a random sample of all projects nationally. However, the percentage of adults for whom the GED is not a current goal is five times larger in the Universe Study (36.3 percent versus 7.3 percent). One explanation is that there are more projects in the Universe Study than in the Sample Study that have a high percentage of ESL students.

In the first Even Start evaluation, the NEIS reported that 7.1 percent of adults without a high school diploma at intake attained the certificate over one program year. This figure is quite comparable to what we see among the Universe Study. In the earlier In-Depth Study, 14.3 percent of adults in the program and 3.6 of the control group attained a GED over a nine-month period. Thus, the percentage of adults in the Sample Study who attained the GED certificate is nearly double that of the In-Depth Study (which did have a higher percentage of ESL adults) and far above the proportion in the control group.

Exhibit 7.19.

Progress Toward GED Certificate Among Adults Without High School Diploma or GED (Universe Study and Sample Study, 1994-95)

	Percent of Adults	
Progress Towards GED	**Universe Study (n = 16,226)**	**Sample Study (n = 123)**
GED is not a current goal	36.3%	7.3%
Working toward a GED	50.2%	58.5%
Taken part of GED tests but not yet completed	5.3%	10.3%
Attained a GED since participating in Even Start	8.2%	24.4%

Exhibit reads: 24.4 percent of adults in the Sample Study in 1994-95 attained a GED while participating in Even Start.

Employment Status

Description of the Measure

Participants were asked when they enrolled in Even Start and again at the end of the program year whether they were employed either part-time or full-time. This information is available for adults in the Universe Study and the Sample Study. Although employment is not a primary goal of the Even Start program, it is possible that increased education and literacy levels will result in changes in employment status.

Changes in Employment Status

The majority of adults in both the Universe Study (63.5 percent) and the Sample Study (70.2 percent) were not employed at either the beginning or end of the program year (see Exhibit 7.20). Approximately a quarter of the adults in the Universe Study and 15 percent of those in the Sample Study were employed at both points in time. Approximately 10 percent of adults were not employed at the beginning of the year, but were employed at the end of the year.

In the first evaluation, the results were reported slightly differently--restricting the sample to those adults who were not employed at the start of the year. For that study, nearly 78 percent of adults were not employed at intake; of those, nearly 10 percent found employment by the end of the program year. In the In-Depth Study, 12 percent of the program group and 15 percent of the control group found work by the end of the first program year. When data from the current study are restricted to those adults who were not employed at the start of the program year, we find that 14 percent of adults in the Universe Study and 11 percent of adults in the Sample Study found work by the end of the program year. These figures are quite comparable to the results reported from the earlier evaluation.

Exhibit 7.20.

Employment Status at Beginning and End of 1994-95 Even Start Year (Universe Study and Sample Study)

Sample	Percent of Adults		
	Employed at beginning and end of year	Not employed at beginning or end of year	Not employed at beginning, employed at end of year
Universe Study (n = 16,419)	22.0%	63.5%	10.5%
Sample Study (n = 151)	14.6%	70.2%	8.6%

Exhibit reads: 70.2 percent of the adults in the Sample Study were not employed both at the beginning and at the end of 1994-95 project year.

Other Progress Indicators

Description of the Measures

Even Start program staff at the local, state and federal levels were interested in the extent to which Even Start participants achieve other credentials that require reading and completing written tests or other criteria. Examples include becoming a U.S. citizen, obtaining a driver's license, and getting a Red Cross First Aid card. Each of these represent goals that are likely to have more tangible meaning for adults than simply taking a test. For the current evaluation, project staff indicated whether each of these progress indicators was a goal for adults this year and whether they were working on or achieved the goal during the Even Start year. These data are available for both the Universe Study and the Sample Study, but were not collected during the first Even Start evaluation.

Changes in Progress Indicators

For most adults, these progress indicators were not a goal during the current year (see Exhibit 7.21). In the Universe Study, about 5 percent of adults are working toward U.S. citizenship or a driver's license; in the Sample Study this percentage was closer to 1 percent. Less than 1 percent of adults in either the Universe or Sample Study obtained U.S. citizenship during the 1994-95 program year, and 1 to 3 percent obtained a driver's license. A slightly higher percentage obtained a Red Cross First Aid card in the Universe Study (2.4 percent) than in the Sample Study (4.9 percent).

Exhibit 7.21.

Other Progress Indicators for Even Start Adults
(Universe Study and Sample Study, 1994-95)

Progress Indicators	Not a goal this year	Working toward	Obtained while in Even Start
Universe Study (n = 16,503)			
U.S. Citizenship	93.9%	5.4%	0.7%
Driver's License	91.5%	5.3%	3.3%
First Aid Card	95.3%	2.2%	2.4%
Sample Study (n = 164)			
U.S. Citizenship	99.4%	0.6%	0.0%
Driver's License	98.2%	1.2%	0.6%
First Aid Card	92.0%	3.1%	4.9%

Exhibit reads: 4.9 percent of the adults in the Sample Study obtained a first aid card during the 1994-95 Even Start project year.

Findings from Two Evaluations: A Detailed Review

At this point we will bring together specific outcome data from the first and second Even Start evaluations in order to discuss further what we have learned about the effects of Even Start on children's cognitive development and adult literacy.

Child Cognitive Development

We first consider the findings based on PSI scores. The line labeled "developmental growth" in Exhibit 7.22 shows that children's scores on the PSI increase as they age, by about .40 items per month. This is one estimate, derived from an analysis of PSI pretest scores, of how we can expect Even Start children to perform on the PSI in the absence of any intervention. The two lines labeled NEIS and ESIS show the observed PSI growth rates for children in the first and second evaluations, respectively. These growth rates are almost identical (about .90 items per month) and are more than double the expected developmental growth rate. This analysis would lead us to conclude that Even Start has an important impact on children's PSI scores.

But, other data also are available. The two lines on Exhibit 7.22 labeled IDS Even Start and IDS Control show the growth rates for children in the five sites that participated in an experimental "In-Depth Study" during the first evaluation. The growth rates for children in these groups fall between expected developmental growth and the two "universe" estimates. This is not unexpected--the five sites selected for the In-Depth Study cannot be expected to exactly mirror the universe of Even Start projects.

Exhibit 7.22. PSI Growth for Different Even Start Evaluation Samples, Compared With Developmental Growth

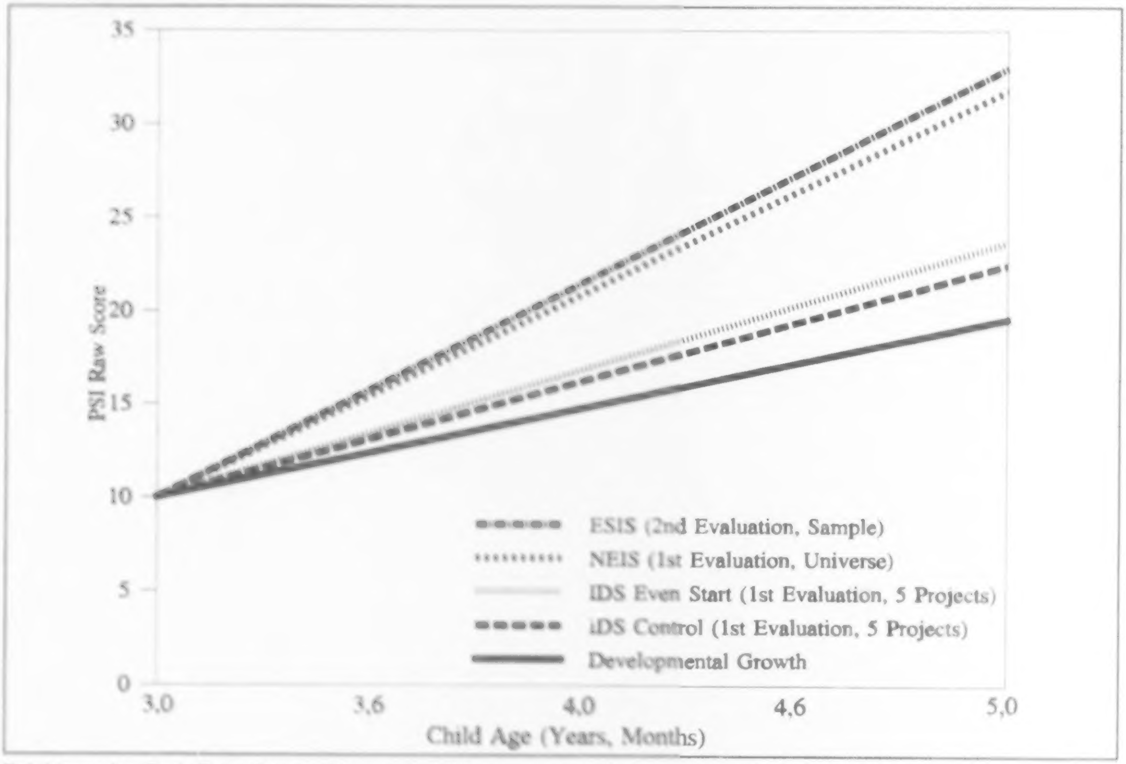

Exhibit reads: Both Even Start children and children in a control group achieved gains on the PSI.

On the other hand, the difference in growth rates between the randomly assigned Even Start and control group children is not statistically significant, indicating that we see no special effect of being in Even Start. Additional analyses, presented in the first evaluation report, show that the straight line growth rates presented in Exhibit 7.22 are a bit misleading. In particular, Even Start children in the IDS sites do outscore control group children during their first year in the program, when control group children typically are not in any organized preschool program. However, control group children's PSI scores catch up once they enter preschool or the public school system.

The same pattern is seen in an analysis of data from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), a measure used only in the first evaluation. Exhibit 7.23 shows that the universe of children in the first evaluation gained at a faster rate than children in the IDS study. Children in the IDS Even Start group gained more than IDS control group children from pretest to the first posttest. However, control group children caught up by the time that the second posttest was administered.

Exhibit 7.23. PPVT Growth for Different Even Start Evaluation Samples

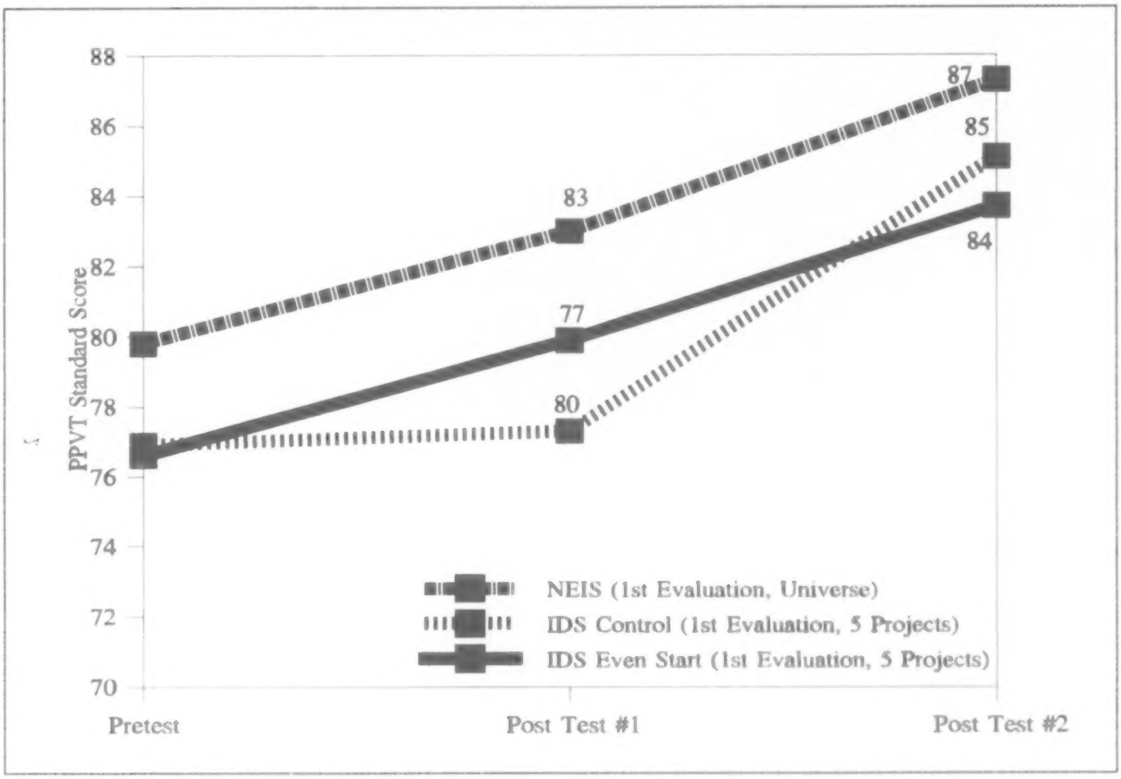

Exhibit reads: Children in the In-Depth Study Even Start sample scored higher on the PPVT than children in the control group at the first posttest; children in the control group caught up by the second posttest.

Analysis of data collected on the PLS-3 in the second Even Start evaluation shows growth from pretest to posttest (over a single school year), and this growth partially closes the gap between Even Start children and children in the PLS norms group (Exhibit 7.24). There is no control group of children in the second evaluation, and it will be important to see how Even Start children perform on the PLS-3 when measured two years after enrollment in the program.

It appears from all of these measures that children get a "boost" in cognitive development when they first are exposed to an organized school setting (preschool or the public schools). Enrollment in Even Start ensures that such an exposure occurs at an earlier age, and so Even Start children get an earlier boost than control group children. The question to be answered by future research is whether that early boost translates into other types of benefits for Even Start children.

Exhibit 7.24. PLS-3 Growth for the ESIS Evaluation Sample

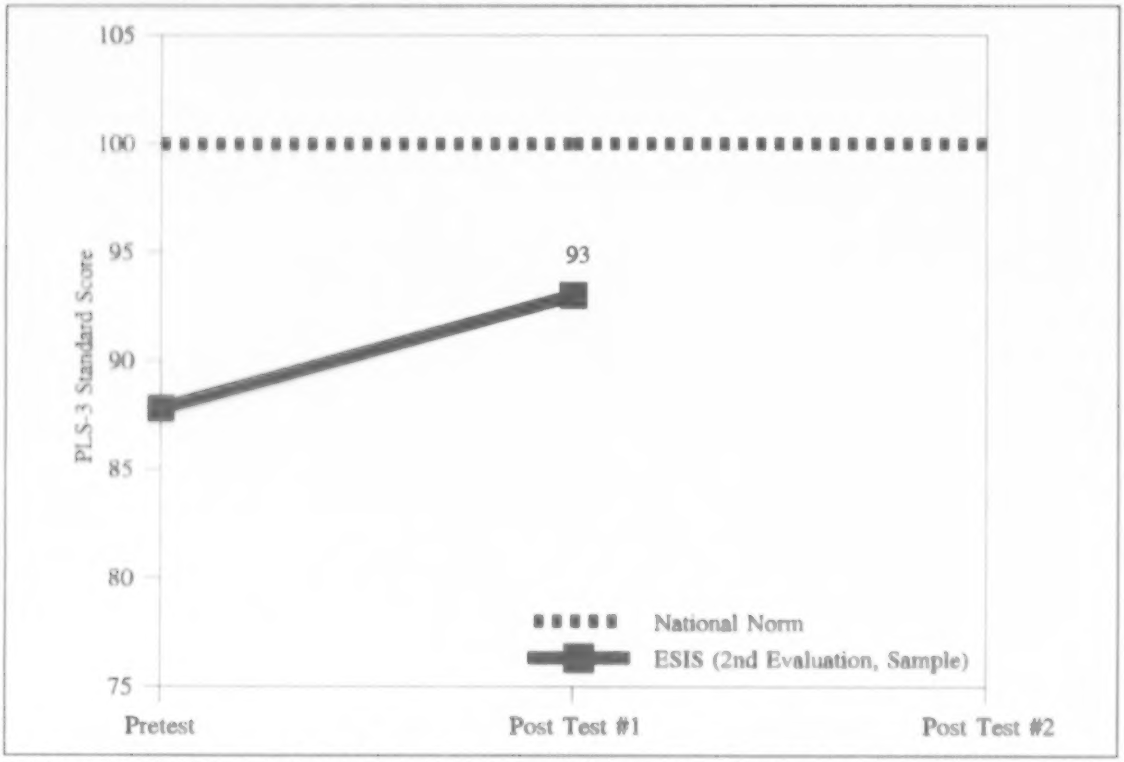

Exhibit reads: Children in the Sample Study in 1994-95 scored closer to the national norm on the PLS-3 at posttest than at pretest. No control group data are available for this analysis.

Adult Literacy Development

We now review specific findings regarding adult basic skills development from the two evaluations. According to the CASAS developers, a score of 225 on the CASAS reading test signifies high school level performance. Exhibit 7.25 shows that all of the Even Start evaluation groups perform at or above this level. The exhibit also shows that adults in both the first and second Even Start evaluations (NEIS and ESIS) make pretest-posttest gains on the CASAS reading test. Those gains are as large or larger than the gains observed in other studies of adult education programs.

But, how do we know that Even Start was responsible for the gains? One way of judging this is to examine the CASAS reading scores of adults who participated in the random assignment In-Depth Study that was conducted in five projects as part of the first Even Start evaluation. The Even Start IDS group does not gain much from pretest to first posttest (one school year), but then makes a more substantial gain from the first posttest to the second posttest (the second school year). While the IDS control group starts out a few points lower at pretest, their growth rate exactly parallels the Even Start group. This occurs, in part, because adults in the IDS control group also availed themselves of local adult education programs, leading to the conclusion that while Even Start adults do make gains on the CASAS reading test, we cannot necessarily attribute those gains to Even Start.

Exhibit 7.25. CASAS Reading Growth for Different Even Start Evaluation Samples

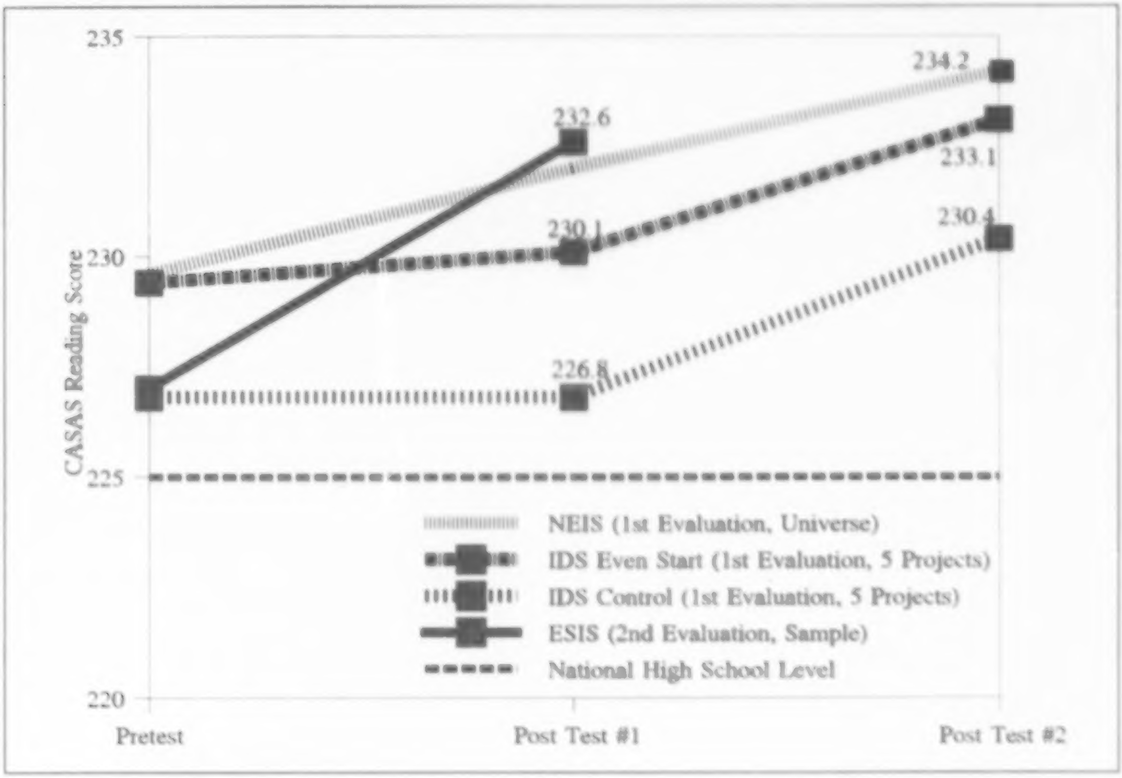

Exhibit reads: Even Start adults achieved gains on the CASAS reading test in the first and second evaluations, but so did adults in a control group.

Even Start adults also show a pattern of growth on the CASAS math test (which was used only in the second evaluation). Exhibit 7.26 shows that Even Start adults who entered the program scored almost half a standard deviation below the high school level. After one program year, their scores had increased so that they now were able to perform high school level work. While it is an impressive gain, we do not have a control group against which to gauge the progress of Even Start adults. Hence, we cannot unambiguously attribute this growth to Even Start.

Exhibit 7.26. CASAS Math Growth for the ESIS Evaluation Sample

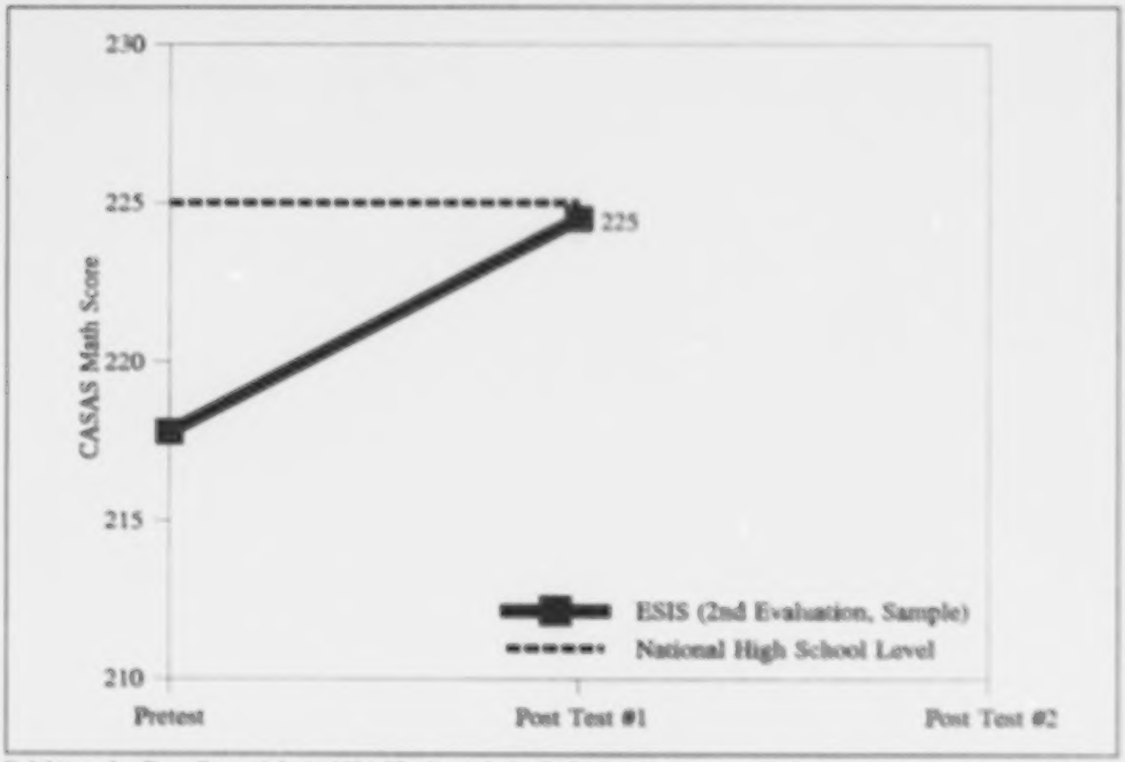

Exhibit reads: Even Start adults in 1994-95 who took the CASAS math test scored below the high school level at pretest, but their scores increased to the high school level at posttest. No control group data are available for this analysis.

Exhibit 7.27 presents growth data for Even Start adults on the TABE reading and math tests. Both of these measures were used only in the second evaluation, and while adults show clear gains of about .3 standard deviation units on each test, we have no control group and are unsure of the extent to which Even Start was responsible for these gains.

Based on these data we are faced with uncertainty about Even Start's effects on adult literacy. Clearly, adults who participate in Even Start make gains on all of the measures that have been used. Gains in math appear to be larger than gains in reading. However, where data are available on adults not in Even Start, they too make gains, possibly because they too take part in adult education programs. Even Start may offer additional benefits to adult literacy over and above those conferred by participation in regular adult education programs. At this point, however, we are unable to confirm this assertion.

Exhibit 7.27. TABE Reading and Math Growth for the ESIS Evaluation Samples

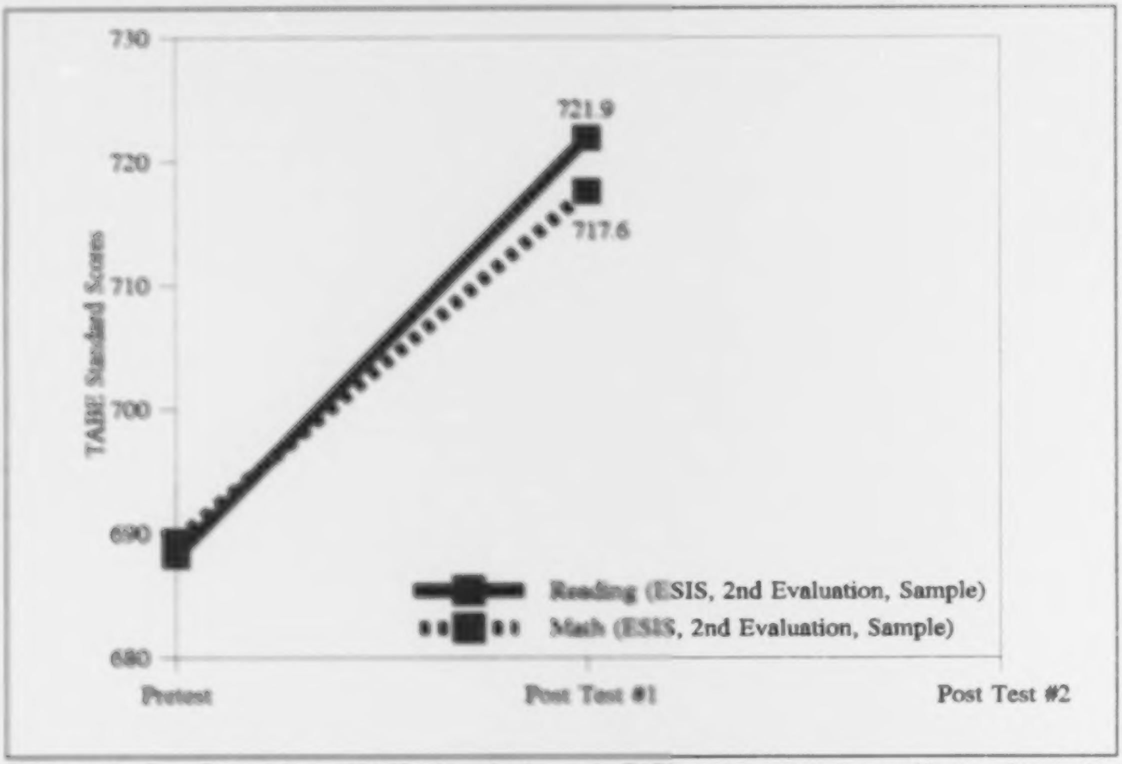

Exhibit reads: Even Start adults in 1994-95 achieved gains on the TABE reading and math tests. No control group data are available for this analysis.

A final piece of information about adult literacy is presented in Exhibit 7.28, which shows the rate at which adults attained a GED while in Even Start. The two "universe" estimates (from the first and second evaluations) each show that 8 percent of Even Start adults attain a GED over a program year. The random assignment In-Depth Study from the first evaluation shows that adults in Even Start were far more likely to attain a GED than control group adults (22 percent vs. 6 percent). It seems clear that Even Start does help adults get a GED. The question to pose next is "How helpful is a GED?" There is little evidence that a GED can be equated with any particular level of literacy performance or gains (e.g., the New Chance evaluation conducted by Quint, et al, 1994). Recent research by Murnane, Willett, and Boudett (1995) shows that attainment of a GED is better in an economic sense than not having a GED, but is not as beneficial as having a high school diploma.

Exhibit 7.28. Rate of GED Attainment for Different Even Start Evaluation Samples

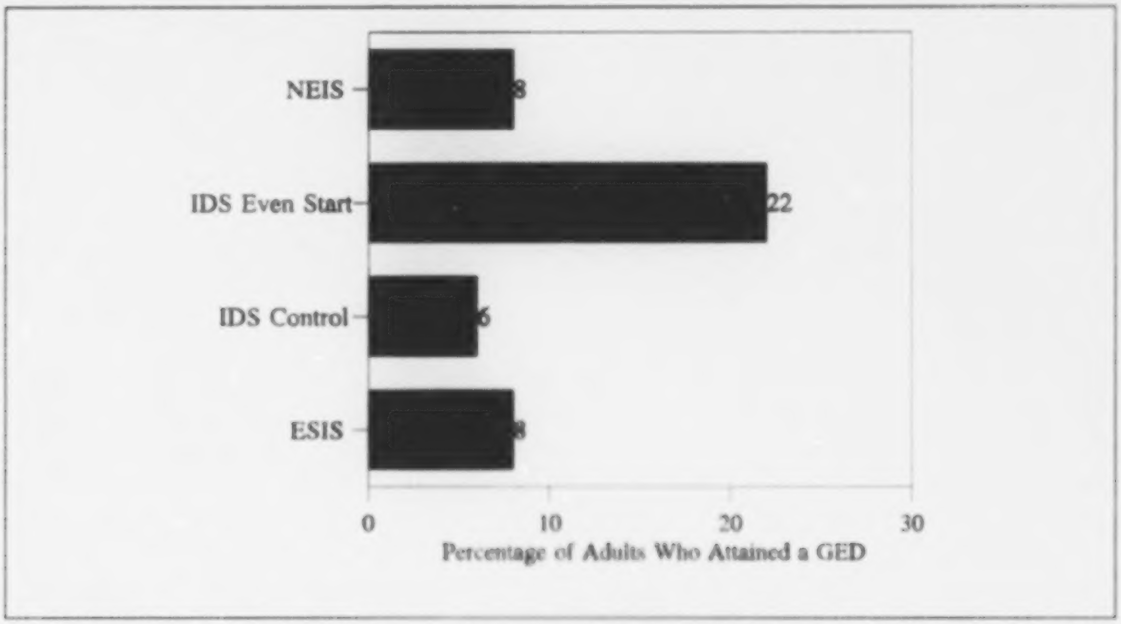

Exhibit reads: Even Start adults in the first and the second evaluations attained GEDs at a much faster rate than control group adults.

The GED is a credential, one which appears to be better than no credential at all. It also is an important focus of many Even Start projects, and a goal which seems to be achievable by many Even Start adults within a reasonable period of time. What is less well understood is the extent to which a GED is associated with improved adult literacy and the extent to which Even Start projects may have to make tradeoffs between literacy improvements and GED attainment.

Chapter Eight

Do Program Outcomes Vary Depending on Participant and Project Characteristics?

This chapter is exploratory in nature. It seeks to determine whether there are relationships between child/parent gains on various outcome measures on the one hand, and either participant characteristics or project characteristics, on the other. If we find that such relationships do, in fact, exist, we cannot be certain about how best to interpret them (i.e., correlation does not imply causality). Still, we hope that the analyses presented here will be provocative and perhaps will suggest fruitful avenues for further research.

In this chapter we discuss two outcome variables for children (the PSI and PLS-3); four outcomes for parents (the CASAS reading and math tests, the TABE reading and math tests); and two family outcomes (the HOME screening questionnaire for children ages 0-3 and children ages 3-6). These measures are described in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Participant characteristics used in the analysis include the number of hours of instruction received by parents in adult education and in parenting education, the number of hours of instruction received by children in early childhood education, and the number of hours that parents and their children spent in joint Even Start activities. These numbers were recorded by local project staff on a monthly basis throughout the year. In addition, an index of family "need," which was discussed in Chapter Six of this report, is used as a participant characteristic.

Finally, several project characteristics are used in the analysis, including the amount of the federal Even Start grant, the number of families served by the project, the number of staff employed by the project, the qualifications and experience of project staff, the number of hours of core services offered to adults and children (as distinct from the number of hours received, which is treated as a participant characteristic), the percentage of core service hours offered in a home-based mode, and whether the project offers child care and transportation as support services.

Key Findings: Past to Present

We examined the extent to which variation in outcomes was associated with participant characteristics and with program characteristics. The amount of instruction received by Even Start participants is related to almost all outcomes measured in this evaluation--higher levels of instruction are associated with larger gains. As might be expected, children from the most needy families benefit less from Even Start than children from less needy families. We found no relationship *between educational gains for children or adults and project characteristics such as size, or staff characteristics such as amount of education and experience. Children in projects that emphasize center-based programs have larger learning gains than children in projects that emphasize home-based services. Finally, families in projects that allocate large amounts of time for parents and children to spend together have better home environments than families in projects that allocate less time on parent/child time together.*

How Do Outcomes Vary by Participant Characteristics?

Here we examine the extent to which there are statistically significant relationships between outcomes for children and parents and participant characteristics on dimensions such as monthly hours of core services received and family needs. Each of the analyses reported was based on a simple regression model in which the posttest value of a given outcome variable was predicted from the pretest value of that variable and the participant characteristic in question. Data from the first Even Start evaluation also were analyzed where appropriate to examine patterns over the duration of the Even Start program.

Hours Received per Month

The number of hours of core services received by adults and children in the Sample Study are shown in Exhibit 8.1 for both the total number of hours over the program year and the average number of hours per month (for those months in which they participated). For adult education, the average number of hours per month is 25.9, which corresponds to about 6.5 hours per week. In parenting education, the average is 8.6 hours per month or about 2 hours per week. For children 2.5 to 4.5 years old, the average number of hours of early childhood education is 40 hours per month, which corresponds to 10 hours a week (or a 2.5 hour/day program for 4 days/week). For children 4.5 to 7 years old, the average is approximately 36 hours per month.

The total number of hours shown in Exhibit 8.1 are much higher than both the first Even Start evaluation as well as the data reported in Chapter Five of this report for all Even Start projects (including those in the Sample Study). Based on families included in the Sample Study, Even Start adults currently receive about 26 hours of adult education per month, compared with 13.5 hours for families participating in the first evaluation. The total number of hours of adult education among Sample Study adults averages 220 hours, compared with 107 hours in the first evaluation and 100 hours in the Universe Study of current Even Start projects. The standard deviation for amount of adult education received is quite large in each of these studies, indicating that there continues to be great variation in the amount of services received from project to project.

Exhibit 8.1.

Amount of Core Services Received (Sample Study, 1994-95)

	Hours	
	Mean	**SD**
Adult Basic Education		
Hours/Month	25.9	15.9
Total Hours	219.6	161.6
Parenting Education		
Hours/Month	8.6	6.8
Total Hours	68.6	61.4
Early Childhood Education		
Hours/Month (ages 2.5 - 4.5 years)	40.0	26.3
Total Hours (ages 2.5 - 4.5 years)	353.5	260.3
Hours/Month (ages 4.5 - 7 years)	35.7	23.2
Total Hours (ages 4.5 - 7 years)	311.1	227.9

Exhibit reads: The average Even Start adult in 1994-95 received 25.9 hours of adult basic education each month, and a total of 219.6 hours of adult basic education over the entire program year.

The same conclusions hold for amount of early childhood education: children 2 to 4.5 years of age in the Sample Study received an average of 40 hours per month (354 total hours in the program year) of early childhood education services, compared with 26 hours per month (232 total hours) in the earlier evaluation. The amount of parenting education currently averages 8.6 hours per month, up from 6.5 hours per month in the earlier study.

There are several possible explanations for the general increase in amount of service received by participating families. One explanation is that different projects participated in the two studies. It may be that the newer projects simply offered more intensive programs than the first group of projects. This explanation is bolstered by the fact that in recent years the Department of Education has been pushing Even Start projects to provide more intensive service levels. Another possible explanation is that different parents participated in the two studies. It may be that Even Start projects are now recruiting parents who are more motivated and interested in participating than parents who were recruited for the first study.

A third explanation is that even though the 57 Sample Study projects were randomly selected, they may be atypical in some respects. In particular, adults in the Sample Study projects have higher numbers of hours of instruction **received** than adults in the universe of Even Start projects (as reported in Chapter Five of this report). This is puzzling since we also find that the average numbers of hours **offered** by projects in the Sample Study and the Universe Study are very similar on adult and parent education, and the average is only slightly higher on early childhood education in the Sample Study projects.

A final possible explanation is to reconsider the sample of families from whom the test data for Sample Study were collected. Although the Sample Study projects were selected to represent all areas of the country, the families participating in Sample Study were further selected by the following three features:

- only families that enrolled in Even Start in the fall of 1994 were included;
- families in which a parent and child spoke either English or Spanish; and
- the Sample Study data analyses were based on parents and children who had both pretest and posttest scores.

It is possible that new enrollees were more motivated to participate fully in the core educational services in the first several months of Even Start experience than families with longer Even Start experiences. While the language-minority parents in the Universe Study did not necessarily have lower participation outcomes than white and African American families (see Chapter Five), the exclusion of limited English parents from the Sample Study did introduce another basis for selection bias. In order to assess the program effectiveness within the design of the Sample Study, it also was necessary to restrict analyses to those participants who had both the pretest and posttest scores. This restriction is likely to have resulted in excluding families who had poor attendance records and who exited the program without allowing the project staff to administer the posttests.

Exhibit 8.2 compares the amount of core services received for the group of participants who did not remain in the program long enough to be posttested with participants who had data at pretest and posttest. For adult education, the total number of hours decreased from 219.6 for the sample with pre-post data to 88 hours for adults with only pretest data. These differences can be partially explained by the fact that adults with only pretest data were in the program an average of 4 months, compared with 8 months for those who have valid posttests. However, even the hours per month (which only includes months of active participation) are lower in the pretest-only group. Similar results are seen for parenting education and early childhood education.

These results have positive implications for the program--that families who stay in the program longer will receive higher levels of instruction. The data shown in Exhibit 8.2 also help explain differences in amount of hours received by families participating in the Sample Study and families in both (1) the first Even Start evaluation and (2) the universe of current Even Start programs. Both of the latter two studies based the average number of hours on children/adults who had some participation in the program but who did not necessarily remain in the program for the whole year.

Exhibit 8.2.

Amount of Core Services Received for Subgroups With and Without Posttest Data (Sample Study, 1994-95)

	Tested at pretest but not at posttest			Tested at pretest and at posttest		
	N	**Mean**	**SD**	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**
Adult Basic Education						
Total hours	207	88.0	86.0	208	219.6	161.6
Hours/month	207	20.4	15.5	208	25.9	15.9
Parenting Education						
Total hours	180	28.2	28.6	301	68.6	61.4
Hours/month	180	6.0	4.8	301	8.6	6.8
Early Childhood Education for Children Under Age 4½						
Total hours	68	164.0	165.8	255	353.5	260.3
Hours/month	68	28.3	22.5	255	40.0	26.3
Early Childhood Education for Children Ages 4½ to 7						
Total Hours	34	206.1	176.1	143	311.1	227.9
Hours/month	34	34.5	23.7	143	35.7	23.2

Exhibit reads: The 301 adults who were pretested and posttested received an average of 68.6 hours of parenting education in 1994-95. An additional 180 adults were pretested (but not posttested). This group received an average of 28.2 hours of parenting education.

Gains on Outcome Measures by Hours of Instruction Received

We conducted several sets of analyses to determine whether the observed pre-post gains on the child and parent outcome measures were related to the amount of service received by a child or parent. Several statistically significant relationships were found (shown in Exhibit 8.3 through Exhibit 8.7). Each of these exhibits plots the standardized gain for a given outcome measure (posttest score minus pretest score, divided by the standard deviation of the pretest) against total hours of service received. We show the standardized gains so that all of the exhibits are shown in a common metric--the standard deviation unit.

Exhibit 8.3. Standardized Gain on PSI, by Total Hours of Early Childhood Education (1994-95)

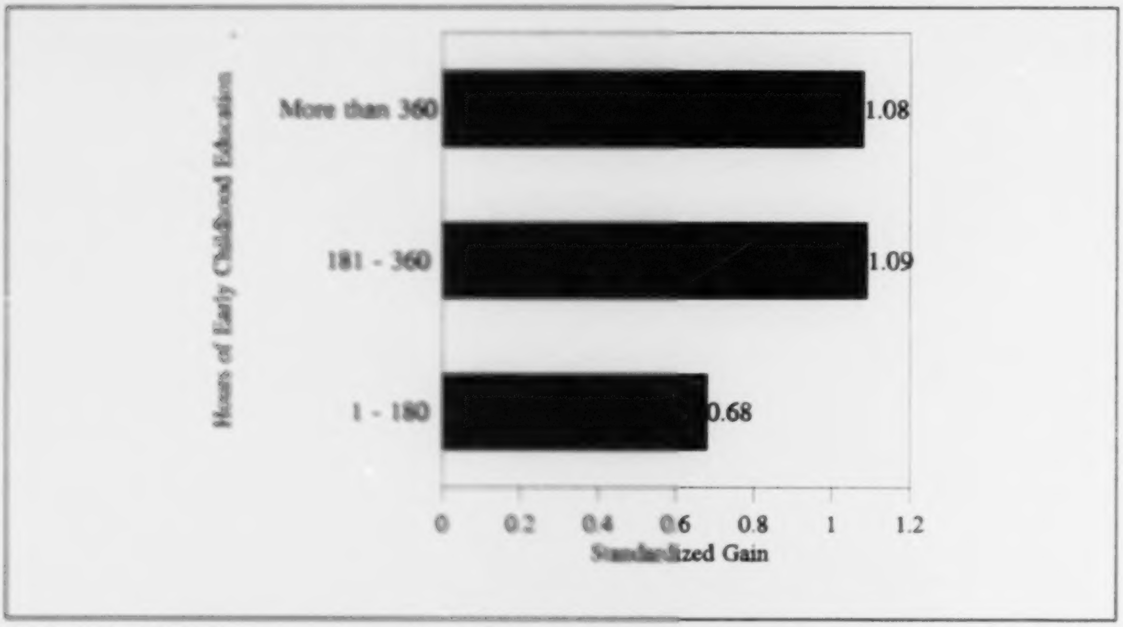

Exhibit reads: Children who received more than 360 hours of early childhood education gained an average of 1.08 standard deviations on the PreSchool Inventory in 1994-95.

Exhibit 8.4. Standardized Gain on PLS-3 Total Language Score, by Total Hours of Early Childhood Education (1994-95)

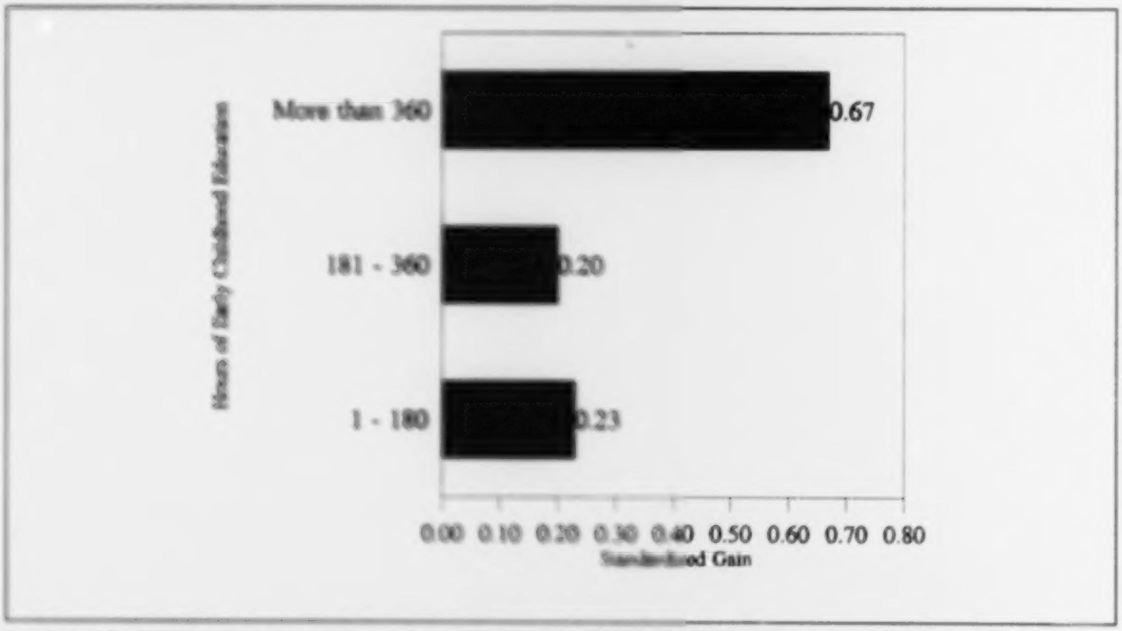

Exhibit reads: Children who received more than 360 hours of early childhood education gained an average of .67 standard deviations on the PLS-3 total language scale in 1994-95.

201

Exhibit 8.5. Standardized Gain on HOME Screening Questionnaire, by Total Hours of Parenting Education (1994-95)

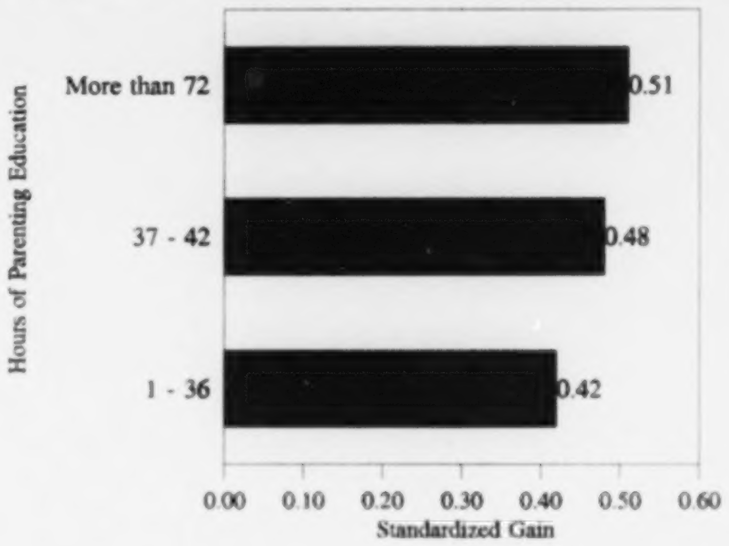

Exhibit reads: Adults who received more than 72 hours of parenting education gained an average of .51 standard deviations on the HOME screening questionnaire in 1994-95.

Exhibit 8.6. Standardized Gain on CASAS Math, by Total Hours of Adult Education (1994-95)

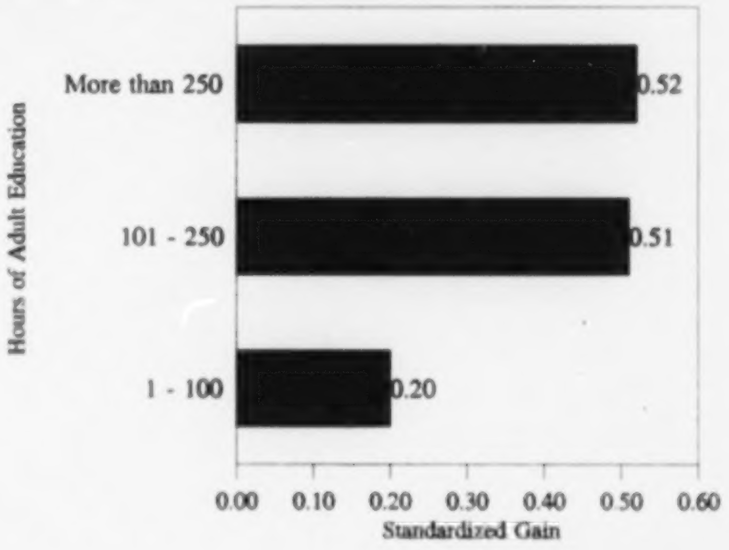

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95 adults who received more than 250 hours of adult education gained an average of .52 standard deviations on the CASAS math scale.

Exhibit 8.7. Standardized Gain on TABE Math, by Total Hours of Adult Education (1994-95)

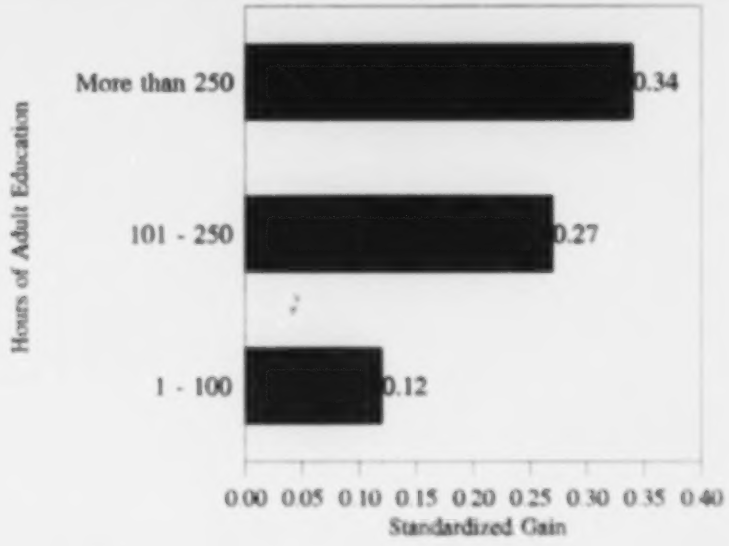

Exhibit reads: Adults who received more than 250 hours of adult education in 1994-95 gained an average of .34 standard deviations on the TABE math scale.

For ease of interpretation, Exhibits 8.3 through 8.7 show the effect sizes for different numbers of hours related to possible service configurations. For example, for early childhood education, we show the effect sizes on the PSI and PLS-3 for 1 to 180 hours of instruction, which corresponds to a 2.5 hour/day program for 2 days per week for 9 months (2.5 x 2 x 4 x 9 = 180); 360 hours corresponds to a 2.5 hour/day program that meets 4 times per week for the same 9 months. For the HOME Screening Questionnaire, we break the total hours in parenting education into increments of 36: 36 hours would equal 1 hour per week for 9 months; 72 hours corresponds to 2 hours per week for the same period. For the CASAS and TABE, we use increments of 100 hours because many adult education programs hypothesize the need for at least 100 hours of instruction before gains are realized.

Each of these significant relationships are described below, with the specific gains to be realized from 100 hours of instruction[25]. Each gain is described in the original metric of the instrument and in terms of standard deviation units:

- Total hours of early childhood education has a statistically significant positive relationship to gains on the PSI (Exhibit 8.3). An increase of 100 hours of early childhood instruction is associated with a gain of .6 points on the PSI (.09 of a standard deviation).

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[25] These estimates are based on the regression coefficients for total hours of participation as continuous variables.

- Total hours of early childhood education has a statistically significant positive relationship to gains on the PLS-3 (Exhibit 8.4). An increase of 100 hours of early childhood instruction is associated with a gain of .7 points on the PLS-3 (.004 of a standard deviation).

- Total hours of parenting education has a statistically significant positive relationship to gains on the HOME screening questionnaire (Exhibit 8.5). An increase of 100 hours of parenting education instruction is associated with a gain of 2 points on the HOME (.28 of a standard deviation).

- Total hours of adult education has a statistically significant positive relationship to gains on the CASAS math test (Exhibit 8.6). An increase of 100 hours of adult education instruction is associated with a gain of 2 full points on the CASAS math test (.14 of a standard deviation).

- Total hours of adult education has a statistically significant positive relationship to gains on the TABE math test (Exhibit 8.7). An increase of 100 hours of adult education instruction is associated with a gain of 8 points on the TABE math test (.07 of a standard deviation).

All of these findings make sense--hours of instruction for adults are related to math gains for adults; hours of instruction for children are related to gains for children; and hours of instruction in parenting are related to gains on the HOME.

Other similar analyses did not find statistically significant relationships. In particular, we did not find significant relationships between either the CASAS or TABE reading tests and hours of adult education. It is unclear why we find positive relationships for adults on math but not on reading. We do see larger absolute gains on math than on reading--perhaps it simply is easier to affect math scores than reading scores, or perhaps the math instruction delivered through most Even Start projects is more directly linked to the items on the math tests.

We did not find a significant relationship between amount of parenting education and gains on the child measures (PSI and PLS-3). This is a bit discouraging because such a relationship was found between PPVT gains and amount of parenting education in the first Even Start evaluation, and we hoped to replicate that finding in this second study.

We expect that the causal chain implied by this analysis (provide services --> which change parents --> who then alter their behaviors --> producing subsequent changes in children) takes a fair amount of calendar time to occur. The positive findings from the first evaluation were based on data collected over a two-year period. Since data from the current study only cover one program year, it will be worth re-doing this analysis based on a follow-up round of data that will be collected next year. This will allow more time to elapse between service receipt and outcome measurement, and it will replicate the data set we had in the first study (pretest, posttest 9 months later, and followup data 9 months after the posttest).

Gains on Outcome Measures by Family Need Index

In Chapter Six of this report, we described the Even Start population in terms of an index of family need. Here we use a slight modification of that need index[26] and examine its relationship to gains on several outcome measures for children and parents. The need index used ranges from 0 to 7, with one point being given for each of the following conditions: less than an 8th grade education; government assistance as primary source of income; having annual income under $9,000; being a single parent; not speaking English in the home; having more than three children in the household; and not being employed.

There is a statistically significant relationship between the need index and four of eight outcome measures, as shown in Exhibit 8.8. Children and parents with a higher family need level are more likely to have lower gains on the PSI, PLS-3, and the HSQ (for children ages 3-6), but higher gains for the TABE reading test. There was no significant relationship between the need index and the other outcome measures (CASAS reading or math, TABE math, HSQ for children ages 0-3).

The exhibit shows the raw score change on each outcome that is associated with an increase of an extra point on the need index. Also shown is the standardized change associated with the extra point on the need index. It is interesting to observe that, regardless of the outcome measure, a change of one point on the need index appears to lead to a change of about .06 or .07 standard deviation units on the outcome. Put another way, children from the most needy families in the study (need index of 7) would be expected to score about half a standard deviation lower on the PSI and the PLS-3 than children from the least needy families in the study (need index of 0).

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[26] The two need indices vary by only two variables (employment status versus receipt of government assistance). The modification was necessary to run regressions on individual need indicator variables for the analyses reported in this chapter. The two need indices correlate .95.

Exhibit 8.8.

Relationship Between Need Index and Child/Parent Outcomes (1994-95)

Outcome	Significance Level	Raw Score Change Associated with an Extra Point on the Need Index	Standardized Change Associated with Extra Point on the Need Index	Standardized Difference Between Family with Need Index of 0 vs. Need Index of 7
PSI	p<.00*	-0.48 points	-0.70 sd	-.49 sd
PLS-3	p<.00*	-1.14 points	-065 sd	-.46 sd
CASAS Reading	p<.38	na	na	na
CASAS Math	p<.30	na	na	na
TABE Reading	p<.04*	+4.99 points	+.057 sd	+.40 sd
TABE Math	p<.43	na	na	na
HSQ 0-3	p<.39	na	na	na
HSQ 3-6	p<.01*	-0.48 points	-.065 sd	-.46 sd

*statistically significant.

Exhibit reads: Based on the 1994-95 Sample Study data, one extra point on the "need index" was associated with -.48 points on the PSI, an association that was statistically significant at the p<.00 level.

How Did Outcomes Vary by Project Characteristics?

In this section we examine the extent to which there are statistically significant relationships between outcomes for children and parents and project characteristics such as staffing, size, and funding. Each of the analyses reported was based on a simple regression model in which the posttest value of a given outcome variable was predicted from the pretest value of that variable and the project characteristic in question. We used data from the first evaluation as well as from both the Universe and Sample Studies.

Staff Characteristics

We used four measures of the size and quality of a project's staff: the number of staff in the project, the percentage of instructors with a bachelor's degree or higher, the percentage of instructors with five or more years of experience, and the number of staff per family in the project. Of the 10 outcome variables examined, the only one that was related to more than one staff characteristic is the CASAS math score, where higher posttest scores were associated with a smaller number of staff members at the project level, with fewer staff members per family, and with more highly educated instructors. Since there were few other significant relationships between outcome gains and staff characteristics, it is unclear how much confidence to place in the relationship seen for the CASAS math score.

Project Size

We also used four measures of project size: the anticipated number of families served at the project level, the anticipated number of families served at the site level, the total dollar amount of the project's grant, and the amount of grant funds per family in the project. As was the case for staff characteristics, we found few significant relationships between project size and outcomes. Only the PSI was related to more than one measure of project size. For this outcome measure, higher posttest scores were associated with a larger absolute amount of the federal grant, a larger grant amount per family, and a smaller number of families served. Since this finding (that higher gains are associated with projects that have more resources) is not generalizable across outcome measures, we should exercise caution in interpretation pending replication in the subsequent years of the evaluation.

Service Characteristics

We looked at five indicators of service delivery: The number of hours per year of services delivered (as distinct from the number of hours of services received) in early childhood education, parenting education, and adult education; the total number of hours offered per year of home-based service in each of the three core components; the percentage of services that are home-based in each of the three core components; whether child care is available to most or all families; and whether transportation to services is available to most or all families.

Significant relationships were found for several outcome variables. For the children's measures, higher scores on the PSI at the posttest were associated with fewer home-based hours per month and smaller percentages of home-based early childhood education. Higher scores on the PLS-3 also were related to a lower percentage of time in home-based early childhood education. These findings suggest that children enrolled in projects that emphasize home-based instruction produced lower gains in preschool readiness and language skills than children in projects that emphasize center-based programs. These findings hold up even when controlling for the level of family need. In other words, regardless of the level of family need, the amount of home-based instruction in early childhood education is negatively related to children's scores at the end of the year. Neither the PSI nor the PLS-3 posttest scores were related to the total number of hours of services provided.

The PSI posttest scores were also negatively related to the provision of child care and transportation. These two findings are surprising and are most likely proxies for other characteristics of a program model. For example, programs that offer child care may not offer as intensive an early childhood program, or may offer the early childhood program at a different time or place than the adult or parenting component. These hypotheses deserve further exploration.

For the adult education measures, only the TABE math scores were positively related to service variables. Higher TABE math posttest scores were associated with more hours of adult education provided, more hours per month in home-based instruction, and higher percentage of hours in home-based instruction. Although these findings are provocative, they should be interpreted with caution because similar results are not seen for the TABE reading or for the CASAS.

Posttest scores on the HOME screening questionnaire (HSQ) for parents of children ages 3 to 6 were positively related to the total number of hours of parent-child activities. What is interesting is that there was no relationship between the HSQ and the number of hours of parent education provided to parents alone. While this singular finding should be interpreted with caution, it does suggest that activities where the parents and children are together have more transference to the home environment and to parent-child relationships than parenting information presented to parents alone. This relationship holds up even when controlling for the family need index.

Chapter Nine

How Is the Even Start Program Implemented?

Beginning with an overview of the Even Start program and the national evaluation, this report has described the characteristics of program participants, the services offered by Even Start projects, and the extent of participation. It has also presented focused analyses of families most in need, initial assessments of program effectiveness, and characteristics of projects related to educational outcomes. This chapter returns to Even Start projects once again to discuss their administrative and operational issues. Following the review of key findings from previous evaluation years, this chapter addresses the following topics:

- Administrative and organizational contexts of Even Start projects;
- Funding resources;
- Staffing patterns;
- Inservice training;
- Interagency collaboration;
- Barriers to program implementation and their solutions;
- Technical assistance needs; and
- Evaluation activities and future plans for continuation.

Key Findings: Past to Present

Many aspects of Even Start implementation have not changed greatly over time. For example, a great deal of stability is found in the staff composition of Even Start projects, the credentials of Even Start instructors and aides, the barriers that projects encounter, and the major areas where technical assistance is needed. There was some indication that project staff are attending, on average, more inservice training than they did in Even Start's first four years, although substantial differences in the format for reporting these data allow for only tentative comparisons.

The "typical" project in 1994-95 had a staff of ten Even Start-paid persons: one project administrator; three to four teachers; two teachers' aides; one family specialist; one support service provider; one evaluator; and one administrative support staff person. This breakdown of job categories is almost identical to reports for 1993-94 and is comparable with reports from the first four years of the program.

In 1994-95, 73 percent of Even Start-paid instructors had at least a bachelor's degree, and 23 percent had a master's degree. About 13 percent of aides had a four-year degree, and almost all (96 percent) had a high school diploma or GED. These percentages are virtually identical to those *reported in the 1993-94 Interim Report. Years of professional experience also have remained stable: over half of all Even Start instructors have six or more years of teaching experience.*

Virtually all Even Start staff in 1993-94 and 1994-95 received inservice training in the areas of planning and program improvement, team building, recruitment, retention strategies, and home visits. Generally, the amount of time that staff spend in inservice training has increased since the 1992-93 evaluation when projects reported an annual average of 40 inservice hours per person. In the 1993-94 and 1994-95 evaluations, projects reported inservice in terms of days, not hours. Annually, project administrators received an average of 9 inservice days, instructors and family specialists received 7 to 8 inservice days, and teacher aides received an average of 5 to 6 days. Assuming an 8 hour day, the average number of inservice hours that an Even Start staff spent in 1993-94 and 1994-95 would range from 40 to 72 hours.

The major barriers to program implementation that projects reported in 1992-93 were reported again as "big problems" in 1993-94 and 1994-95. Improving attendance, improving retention and motivation, arranging for transportation, obtaining sufficient financial resources, and obtaining adequate facilities, space or equipment continued to be major problems for one-third to one-fifth of all projects in 1994-95. Similarly, the areas cited as barriers to program implementation also tended to be areas needing technical assistance in both 1993-94 and 1994-95.

One aspect of program implementation showed a substantial change in the early years of Even Start and then seems to have stabilized--the amount of federal Even Start funds spent per family each year. The Final Report from the first evaluation indicated that, as the first 120 Even Start projects matured, the annual per family cost decreased from $5,900 in 1989-90, to $3,700 in 1990-91, to $2,500 in 1991-92, when these projects were second- and third-year projects.

The per family costs for both 1993-94 and 1994-95 were slightly over $2,700; however, they are based on all projects operating each year, including a sizeable number of first-year projects. Thus, the report from the first evaluation indicate an increasing efficiency as projects mature; the data from the current evaluation further suggest that the program as a whole is establishing relative stability fiscally.

What Organizations Operate the Even Start Program?

Since 1992, applications for the state-administered Even Start program are required by statute to be submitted by a local educational agency (LEA) in collaboration with a community-based organization (CBO) or other non-profit agency, or by a CBO or other non-profit organization in collaboration with an LEA. The 1994 reauthorization of Even Start further requires that the co-sponsorship be formalized as a "partnership."

Exhibit 9.1 shows the types of local educational agencies that sponsor Even Start projects. For the majority of projects (79 percent), a single school district is the sponsoring LEA. A few projects reported that their LEA component is a cooperative of several school districts (5 percent) or an intermediate educational unit (3 percent). Thirteen percent of projects reported that their LEA component is some "other" type of educational entity. However, most of the write-in answers referred to a school district or a specific department of a school district; some of the "other" responses were community colleges and Federally Recognized Indian Tribal Organizations.

These responses indicate that the LEA component of co-sponsors had not changed much from 1993-94 when 80 percent of projects reported that single school districts were their co-sponsoring LEA, 5 percent cited school district cooperatives, and 4 percent cited an intermediate educational unit.

Exhibit 9.1.

Type of Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) Co-sponsoring Even Start Projects (1994-95)

Local Educational Agency (LEA)	Number of Projects	Percent of Projects
School district	354	79%
Cooperative of school districts	22	5%
Intermediate educational unit (ESD, BOCES, ISD)	15	3%
Other	60	13%
Total	451	100%

Exhibit reads: For 79 percent of 1994-95 Even Start projects, the LEA sponsors were single school districts.

Project directors were also asked what type of community-based or other non-profit organization served as "co-sponsors." The term "co-sponsors" was used to describe the joint applicants. A wide variety of community agencies serve as "co-sponsors" of Even Start projects (see Exhibit 9.2).

Almost one-fifth of projects (20 percent) reported local, county, or state government agencies as their co-sponsor. Thirteen percent of projects reported that an academic institution is their co-sponsor, followed closely by 12 percent that have a Head Start program as co-sponsor. The community organizations co-sponsoring another 12-13 percent of Even Start projects include: preschool or day care programs; trade or technical schools; volunteer groups; libraries; tribal organizations; religious organizations; and foundations, professional associations, and fraternal organizations.

Twenty-five percent reported that community-based organizations other than the ones we listed are their co-sponsors. These programs and organizations include: the federal JOBS program; the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts of America; the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program; Title I; YWCA; local homeless shelter; JTPA; and the local Private Industry Council.

Exhibit 9.2.

Community-Based Organizations Co-sponsoring Even Start Projects (1994-95)

Community-Based Organization	Number of Projects	Percent of Projects
Local, county, or state government agency	93	20%
Community college, college, or university	62	13%
Head Start	56	12%
Other preschool or day care program	16	3%
Trade or technical school	15	3%
Volunteer group	13	3%
Library	9	2%
Tribal organization	1	<1%
Church, temple, mosque, or other religious group	1	<1%
Foundation, professional association, fraternal organization	2	<1%
Other community-based organization	119	25%
No response	85	18%
Total	472	100%

Exhibit reads: For 20 percent of 1994-95 Even Start projects, local, county, or state government agencies were co-sponsors.

About 18 percent of projects did not indicate a co-sponsoring agency. While the requirement for a co-sponsoring community agency was not in effect until 1992, it was applied to all projects at the time of the continuation grants since 1992. However, the term "co-sponsors" is not commonly used by projects; hence, a misunderstanding of this term may have contributed to the high level of "non-response."

What Funds Support the Even Start Services?

Most of the funding for Even Start projects comes from federal grants. For most of the projects, the federal grants are administered through their states. For Migrant Education and Native American projects, the U.S. Department of Education administers the set-aside grants awarded to state educational agencies (SEAs) and other entities responsible for migrant education and Indian tribes or tribal organizations. Since 1996, Migrant Education projects have also been operated by LEAs and other organizations. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education administers an Even Start grant for a project in a prison that houses women and children and Even Start statewide familiy literacy initiative grants.

As we reported earlier, in 1994-95 490 projects were state-administered, 14 received set-aside funds for Migrant Education Even Start projects, and 9 received the set-aside funds for Indian tribes or tribal organizations. The length of Even Start grants for the projects operating in the 1994-95 program year ranged from one to four years. As shown in Exhibit 9.3, the vast majority of projects (90 percent) had four year grants (one year with three continuation years).[27] The other 10 percent of Even Start projects operating in 1994-95 had received grants for either one year only (5 percent), two years (2 percent), or three years (3 percent).

Exhibit 9.3.

Length of Even Start Grant (1994-95)

Length of Grant	Number of Projects	Percent of Projects
One Year Only	21	5%
Two Years	11	2%
Three Years	16	3%
Four Years	423	90%
Total Reporting	471	100%

Exhibit reads: 90 percent of projects were operating under four-year Even Start grants in 1994-95.

Exhibit 9.4 presents the levels of federal and local funding for Even Start projects in terms of projects' start-up year, federal grant year 1994-95, local contributions for 1994-95, and projects' total resources for 1994-95.

In the first year of projects' current grants, the average grant amount was $176,611. However, some projects received grants that were substantially larger than the average amount. The top 25 percent of projects received $222,580 or more in their first year of operation.

Depending upon the projects' initial award date, 1994-95 was the first, second, third, or fourth year of operation for projects with multi-year grants. The average federal share amount for the 1994-95 program year was $173,586, an average of $600 less per project than the average amount projects received in the 1993-94 program year. Once again, the Even Start federal grants for 25 percent of projects--$212,037 or more--substantially exceeded the average per project federal grant.

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[27] Likewise, a two year grant is one year with one continuation year, and a three year grant is one year with two continuation years.

Exhibit 9.4.

Levels of Funding for Even Start Projects (1994-95)

	Federal Funding, First Year of Current Grant	1994-95 Federal Grant	1994-95 Local Contribution	1994-95 Total Resources
Average per project	$ 176,611	$ 173,586	$ 87,161	$263,975
Amounts received by 25% of projects receiving each category of funds	$ 222,580 or more	$ 212,037 or more	$ 117,033 or more	$332,966 or more
Total projects reporting	456	453	461	447

Note: The amounts shown for the federal and local shares do not equal the Total Resources due to slightly different numbers of projects providing each piece of information.
Exhibit reads: For 1994-95 Even Start projects, the average amount of federal Even Start grants in the first year of current grant was $176,611 per project.

Even Start projects that receive multi-year grants are required to increase the portion of their annual budgets supported by local contributions by increments of 10 percent each year. By the time a project reaches its fourth year, the local "match" amount is 40 percent of the total project budget. Accordingly, project directors were asked to report the levels of local contribution received in the 1994-95 program year including "the dollar amount of (their) in-kind contribution."[28] The average amount of local contribution was $87,161. Moreover, 25 percent of projects received $117,033 or more in local share during the 1994-95 year.

Average total resources, including federal funding and local contributions, was $263,975, an average increase of $25,601 from the average total per-project resources for 1993-94. The combined resources for 25 percent of projects with the most resources in 1994-95 amounted to $332,966 or more.

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[28] The intent of the question was to obtain the dollar value of the local share of the program funding which can consist of cash and in-kind contributions. Therefore, the results are reported as "local contributions."

As reported in Exhibit 9.5, the federal Even Start funds per family across all projects was $2,735, almost identical to the per-family federal expenditure for 1993-94, which was $2,728.[29] (On average, approximately 60 families were enrolled in each Even Start project in 1994-95.) Some projects had considerably less per-family federal funds, while some had significantly more--ranging from $667 per family to $11,641.

Exhibit 9.5.

Funding Resources Per Family (1994-95)

	Federal Funding	**Federal and Local Contributions Combined**
Average across all reporting projects	$2,735	$4,069
Range of per-family costs among 98% of projects	$667 - $11,641	$1,171 - $18,125

Exhibit reads: The average federal Even Start funds per family in 1994-95 was $2,735.

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[29] As noted in 1994 Interim Report, the "average federal cost per family" can be calculated by two methods, depending on the type of information needed. The first method is to calculate the per family federal cost for each project first and then to average the per-family costs from all projects. This method gives an equal weight to each project in calculating the program wide average, disregarding the fact that some projects with a large number of families may operate their programs at a lower per-family cost, while smaller projects may spend greater than average per-family cost. However, the benefit of this method is that it allows for comparing the differences in per-family federal cost among the projects.

The second method is to add the federal funding across all projects (total federal share), add the number of families served across all projects (total families), and then divide the total federal share by the total number of families. The program wide, per-family costs derived through this method takes into account the variations among projects. This is the method used in previous Even Start evaluation reports and this report to assess how the total federal funds across all projects are spent per family program wide.

Exhibit 9.6. Even Start Program Funds per Family per Year

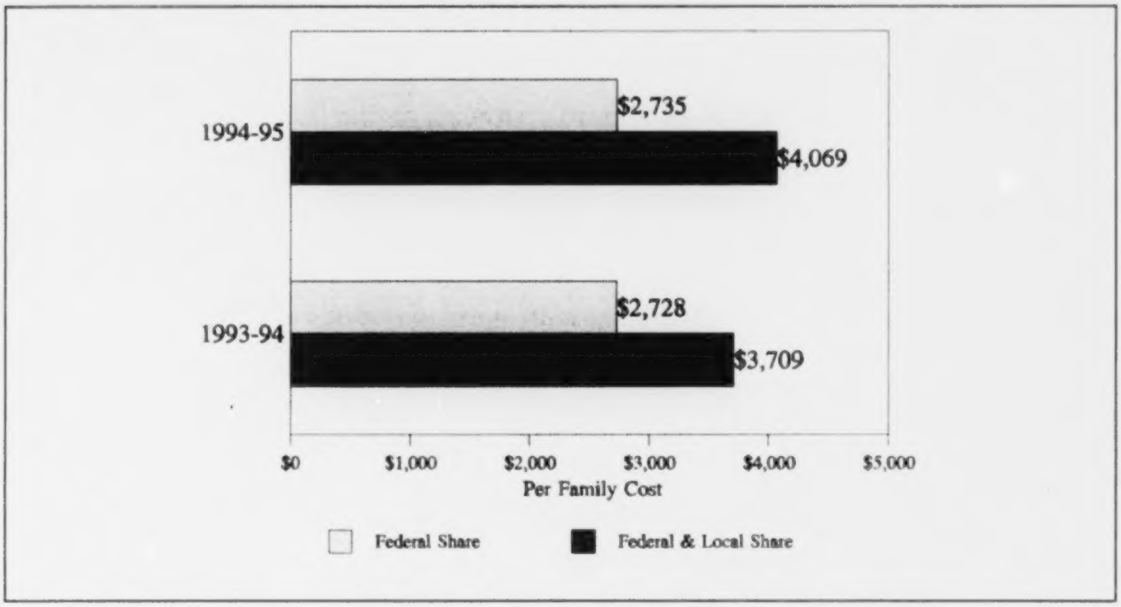

Exhibit reads: The federal Even Start funds averaged $2,728 per family in 1993-94 and $2,735 per family in 1994-95.

The local contributions made a sizeable addition to the total resources available per family. Specifically, when local contributions were combined with federal, the total funds per Even Start family across projects rose to $4,069 (see Exhibit 9.6). These combined funds represent an average increase of $360 per family from last year. As was the case with federal grant monies, projects were highly variable in terms of the amount of combined federal and local monies allocated to each family. Specifically, total project resources per family ranged from $1,171 to over $18,000 per Even Start family.

How Are the Even Start Services Staffed?

To avoid duplicating staff counts, project directors were asked to count each Even Start staff member only once in his or her primary assignment area; however, it is important to realize that in many projects staff members perform multiple roles and functions.

The responses indicate that there is considerable variation in the size and composition of project staff (see Exhibit 9.7). The typical Even Start project has a staff of about 10 persons whose salaries are paid with the federal Even Start funds. However, some of the smaller projects operate with only 4 staff members, and some larger projects have as many as 19 staffers whose salaries are paid with federal Even Start funds.

Exhibit 9.7.

Number of Even Start Paid Staff and Their Assignments (1994-95)

Staff	Average Across All Projects	Number In 90% of Projects
Administrator	1.1	0-2
Instructor	3.6	0-7
Aide	1.9	0-5
Family specialists	1.2	0-4
Support service providers	1.2	0-4
Evaluators	0.7	0-1
Others	0.6	0-2
Total	10.3	4-19

Note: This table includes only the staff who were paid totally or partially with federal Even Start funds in 1994-95. The numbers do not include staff who were paid solely with local matching or collaborating agency funds. If staff had several roles, they were counted only once under their primary assignment.
Exhibit reads: The average number of administrators, paid by federal Even Start funds, was 1.1 per project in 1994-95.

On average, projects tend to have one person who serves as the project administrator, although some projects have co-administrators. The typical Even Start project also has a teaching staff of about 4 instructors (average of 3.6) although some projects reported having no teachers or tutors paid by Even Start, and some reported as many as 7. In the cases of no instructors, it is likely that the administrator or other staff member also serves as a teacher, and/or the instructional staff are supplied by collaborating agencies.

On average, projects have about 2 teacher aides (average 1.9); one family specialist (average 1.2), who took responsibility for recruitment, case management, home visits etc.; one support service provider (social worker, speech therapist, transportation, child care); and one evaluator, who was responsible for data collection and reporting and sometimes for testing participants. Finally, there is often one other staff member, who typically fulfills an administrative support staff role.

We also asked projects to report how many of their Even Start paid instructors and how many of their volunteers teach adult education, parenting education, or early childhood education. If an instructor or volunteer works in more than one area, he or she could be counted in all relevant educational areas. However, each individual could be counted only once in the total number of Even Start paid instructors or the total number of Even Start volunteers.

As Exhibit 9.8 shows, the typical Even Start project funds about two instructors to teach in each of the three core service areas. There is some indication that staff are concentrated in the area of early childhood education.

Exhibit 9.8.

Number of Even Start Paid Instructors and Volunteers, by Instructional Area (1994-95)

Instructional Area	Instructors		Volunteers	
	Average	In 90% of Projects	Average	In 90% of Projects
Adult Education	1.7	0-4	2.2	0-6
Parenting Education	1.8	0-4	1.4	0-4
Early Childhood Education	2.0	0-5	3.5	0-10
Total	3.6	0-7	6.5	0-16

Note: The total is less than the sum of staff in three instructional areas because instructors and volunteers could be counted in all areas they teach, but only once in the total.
Exhibit reads: On average, Even Start projects had 1.7 adult education instructors who were paid by federal Even Start funds in 1994-95.

The right column of Exhibit 9.8 displays the average number of volunteers that work in each of the three core instructional areas. Overall, these means show that volunteers greatly supplement the level of instructional staff available to Even Start projects. On average, each Even Start project has about 6.5 volunteers. Three or four volunteers assist in the area of early childhood education, about two volunteers in adult education, and between one and two volunteers in the area of parenting education.

Professional Qualifications of Even Start Staff

Project directors reported the qualifications of their instructional staff in terms of their highest level of education completed and years of professional experience in the areas they teach. As Exhibit 9.9 indicates, more than three-quarters of Even Start paid instructors have earned a college degree. About one-half of all instructors have a bachelor's degree as the highest degree; 23 percent have a master's degree; and 1 percent have earned a doctoral degree. Another 8 percent have an associate's degree, and 17 percent have a high school diploma or GED certificate.

Exhibit 9.9.

Academic Degrees and Years of Experience of Even Start Instructors and Aides (1994-95)

	Percent of Instructors	Percent of Aides
Highest Level of Education Completed		
Did not complete HS diploma or GED	1%	4%
High school diploma or GED	17%	69%
AA	8%	14%
BA/BS	50%	12%
MA/MS/MEd	23%	1%
PhD/EdD	1%	0%
Special certification or endorsements (including CDA) relevant to Even Start instruction	30%	15%
Years of Experience		
< 1 year	7%	19%
1-5 years	41%	60%
6-10 years	23%	15%
More than 10 years	28%	5%

Exhibit reads: 1 percent of instructors, who were paid by Even Start funds, had not completed high school or earned a GED in 1994-95.

Sixty-nine percent of teachers' aides have a high school diploma or GED certificate as their highest level of education, and 4 percent have not completed high school. Twenty-seven percent of aides have some schooling beyond high school: 14 percent have associate's degrees; 12 percent have bachelor's degrees; and 1 percent have master's degrees.

Teachers tend to have more years of relevant professional experience than aides. For example, one quarter of Even Start teachers have more than 10 years of experience as opposed to 5 percent of aides. Aides' relevant work experience tended to cluster in the 1-5 year range, followed by 19 percent of aides who have less than one year of relevant experience. However, 15 percent of aides have worked in similar positions for between 6 and 10 years, as have 23 percent of teachers.

We also asked how many of the Even Start paid staff had earned special certification or endorsements relative to their Even Start work. In addition to their academic degrees, over one-third of teachers and almost one-fifth of aides had earned their Child Development Associates' certificate or some other certification pertinent to the area they taught in Even Start.

What Inservice Training Do Even Start Staff Receive?

Even Start projects are required by law to provide inservice training to their staff to build upon the education and work experience that staff bring with them. Exhibit 9.10 depicts the average number of hours of inservice training that Even Start staff in each job category received in 1994-95.

Exhibit 9.10. Average Days of Inservice Training During Program Year per Staff, by Staff Category (1994-95)

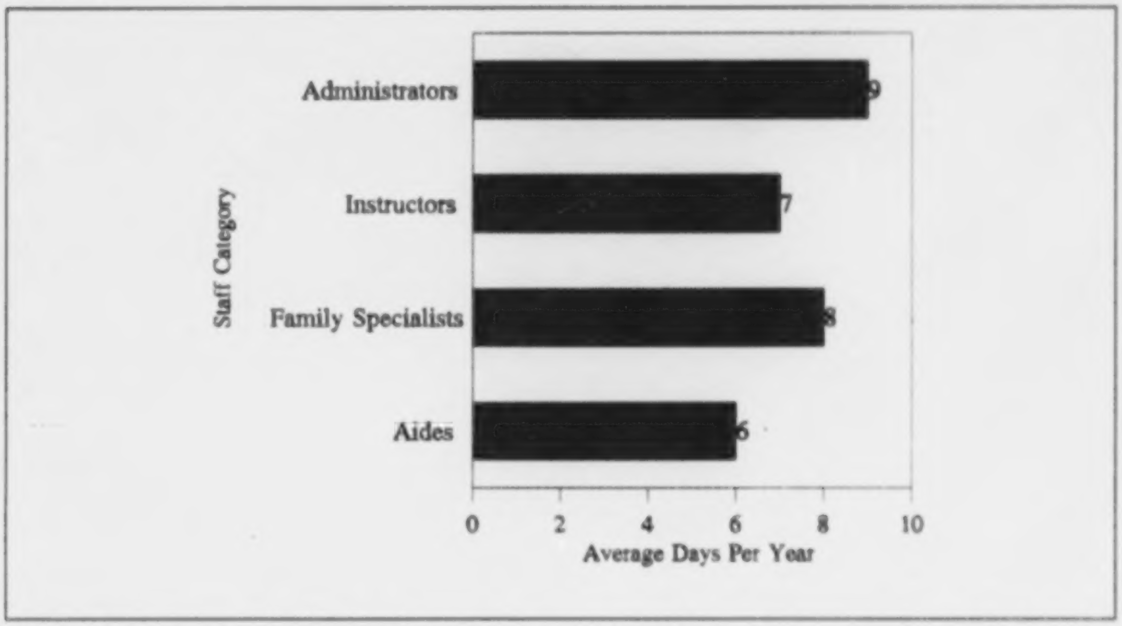

Exhibit reads: On average, Even Start administrators received 9 days of inservice training per person in 1994-95.

As the bar graph in Exhibit 9.10 shows, Even Start administrators, on average, receive the most inservice training of any group, about 9 days per year. Instructors and family specialists receive between 7 and 8 inservice days annually. Teacher aides receive between 5 and 6 days per year on average of inservice training.

Program Coordination

The inservice training provided by Even Start projects covers a wide range of topic areas that pertain to program coordination (see Exhibits 9.11 and 9.12). Ninety-eight percent of projects provide training in program planning or improvement to at least some staff; 76 percent provide training in this area to most staff.

The second topic area emphasized by the vast majority of projects is team building. Ninety-three percent of projects train at least some of their staff in team building strategies, and 69 percent train most of their staff in this area. (Both program planning/improvement and team building emerged as the first and second priority inservice topics in the 1993-94 national evaluation). Recruitment, retention, and home visits are taught to most staff in 57 to 59 percent of projects. Conversely, staff training on the national program evaluation is a training priority for only about one quarter of Even Start projects that presented this topic to most staff (Exhibits 9.11 and 9.12).

Exhibit 9.11.

Percent of Projects Providing Inservice Training in Topics Related to Program Coordination (1994-95)

Training Topic	Number of Projects Reporting	Staff Trained		
		No Staff	Some Staff	Most Staff
Recruitment	448	8%	33%	59%
Retention strategies	441	7%	36%	57%
Team building	442	8%	24%	69%
Interagency collaboration	451	5%	48%	48%
Local program evaluation	446	4%	47%	49%
National program evaluation	444	9%	67%	24%
Planning or program improvement	447	2%	22%	76%
Conducting home visits	446	3%	40%	57%
Visiting other programs	445	16%	52%	33%
First Aid, CPR, or other emergency procedures	437	22%	38%	40%

Exhibit reads: 59 percent of Even Start projects provided inservice training on recruitment issues to most staff in 1994-95.

Fewer than 10 percent of projects reported that they do not provide inservice training in these areas to any of their staff, with the exceptions of "Visiting other programs" (16 percent) and training in emergency procedures, such as First Aid and CPR (22 percent). In the latter case, it may be that emergency medical training is available through community health and other providers in the community and, therefore, projects reserve inservice days for other topics that relate more directly to program operation and the projects' educational goals, as shown in Exhibit 9.13.

Exhibit 9.12. Percent of Projects Providing Inservice Training for Most of Their Staff in Topics Related to Program Coordination (1994-95)

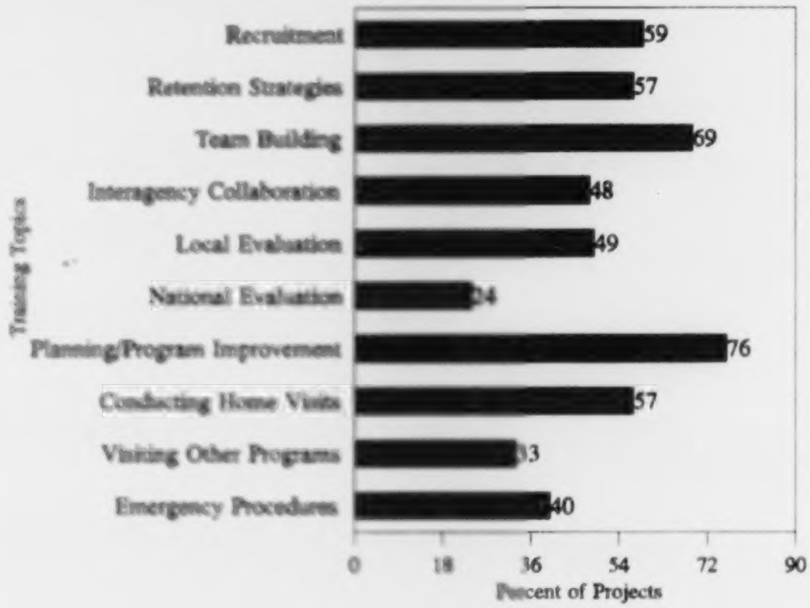

Exhibit reads: 59 percent of Even Start projects provided inservice training on recruitment issues to most of their staff in 1994-95.

Adult Education

Most projects train at least some of their staff in the areas pertaining to adult education. Conducting assessment emerged as the highest priority topic in the adult education inservice area: 93 percent of projects teach assessment techniques to at least some staff; 40 percent train most of their staff in assessment of adult outcomes (see Exhibits 9.13 and 9.14). In 86 percent of projects, at least some staff receive training on how to teach reading, writing, math, and/or social studies; 29 percent of projects train most of their staff in teaching these core areas of the curriculum. While only 15 percent of projects provide training in ESL and vocational or occupational education to most of their staff, 60 and 71 percent of projects, respectively, train at least some of their staff in these two areas.

Exhibit 9.13.

Percent of Projects Reporting Inservice Training in Topics Related to Educational Services (1994-95)

Training Topic	Number of Projects Reporting	Staff Trained		
		No Staff	Some Staff	Most Staff
Adult Education				
ESL	429	41%	45%	15%
Reading, writing, math, social studies	440	14%	57%	29%
Vocational/occupational	429	28%	56%	15%
Assessment	437	7%	53%	40%
Parenting Education				
Parent's role as a teacher	445	2%	33%	65%
Parent and child activities	448	3%	26%	71%
Child rearing, child development	444	3%	32%	65%
Life skills	443	6%	47%	47%
Early Childhood Education (ECE)				
ESL	429	49%	36%	16%
School readiness	447	10%	46%	44%
Child development	446	2%	30%	69%
Classroom or behavior management	446	11%	41%	48%
Assessment	447	7%	43%	51%
Adapting Services to Family Characteristics				
Family educational needs	446	10%	43%	47%
Ethnic/cultural backgrounds	442	10%	42%	48%
Problems, family or personal	447	7%	44%	49%
Learners with special needs	444	14%	52%	34%

Exhibit reads: 15 percent of Even Start projects provided inservice training in ESL for adults to most staff in 1994-95.

223

Exhibit 9.14. Percent of Projects Reporting Inservice Training for Most of Their Staff in Topics Related to Educational Services (1994-95)

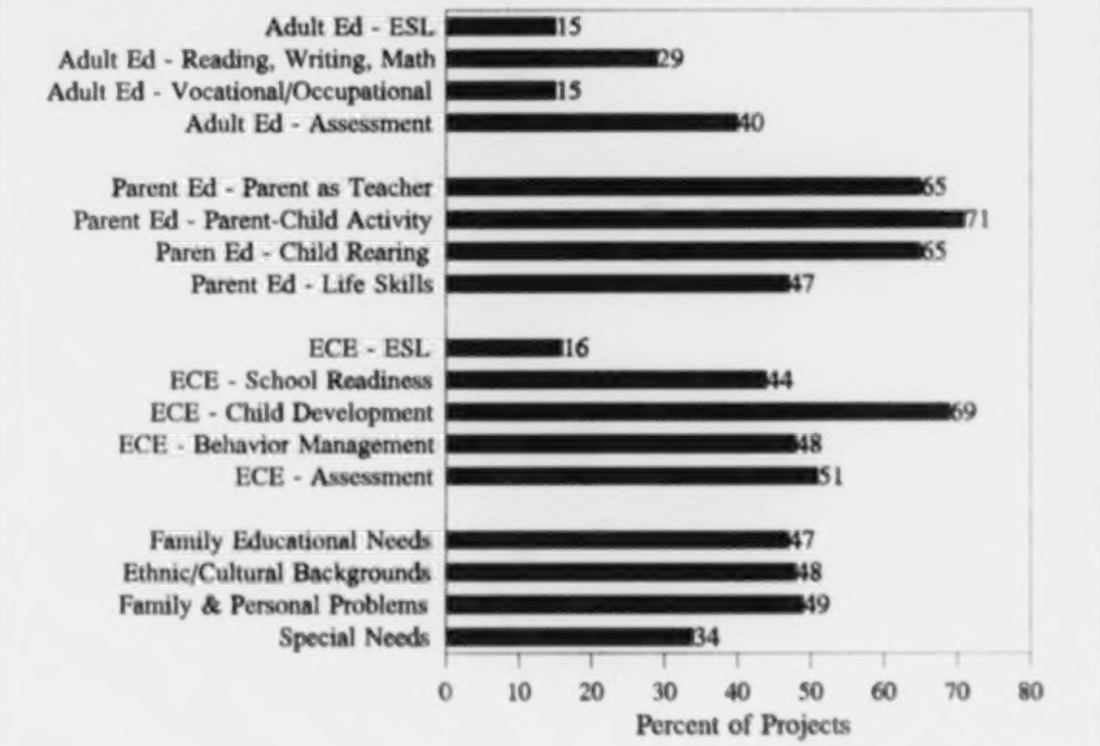

Exhibit reads: 15 percent of Even Start projects provided inservice training on adult education/ESL to most of their staff in 1994-95.

Parenting Education

Even Start projects devote more inservice training efforts to topics related to parenting education than to any other service area, perhaps because parenting education training is the least likely to be available to staff through other local service providers. As shown in Exhibit 9.13, between 94 percent and 98 percent of projects train at least some of their staff in how to teach the four parenting education topics (parent's role as a teacher; parent and child activities; child rearing, child development; and life skills). Training staff to plan and conduct parent and child activities is the parenting education topic that the majority of projects give to "most" of their staff, whereas, training in how to teach life skills is given to the majority of staff by less than half of projects (47 percent).

Early Childhood Education

The majority of projects provide training in early childhood education to at least some of their staff. Almost all projects (99 percent) train at least some of their staff in child development; 69 percent train most of their staff in this area. Ninety-four percent of projects provide training in assessment techniques for at least some staff members. Training in school readiness and in techniques for managing children's behavior is provided to at least some staff by 90 percent and 89 percent of projects, respectively. One exception was ESL, taught to "most" or "some" staff by slightly over half of projects (52 percent).

Adapting Services to Family

In Chapter Four, we saw that most projects make considerable efforts to build flexibility into the scheduling and delivery of their educational services so that families are able to participate. Many projects provide both home- and center-based classes and schedule class times during the day, evening, or weekend in order to accommodate parents' diverse schedules. Providing support services, such as child care and transportation, is yet another way that projects ensure that families are able to participate on a regular basis.

The challenge that Even Start projects face in designing an individually-tailored educational plan for each family is seen clearly in their efforts to provide inservice training in topics related to addressing specific family needs and situations. Between 86 and 93 percent of Even Start projects train at least some of their project staff in how to adapt services to meet individual families' needs. Almost half of projects teach most staff ways of working with participants' different family and personal problems (49 percent), ethnic and cultural backgrounds (48 percent), and particular educational needs (47 percent). Fewer projects teach most of their staff how to teach participants with special needs, such as dyslexia, learning delays, or other handicapping conditions that can impede learning.

The six topics that are most commonly taught to most staff across all projects are: program planning and program improvement; parent and child activities; child development; parent's role as a teacher; child rearing and child development; and team building.

Other Inservice Topics Presented to Even Start Staff

Over 60 Even Start projects reported that their staff had attended inservice sessions on topics other than those already listed for the program coordination and core educational services domains. From the responses of over half of these projects, we were able to extract the following four inservice training topic areas: improving the quality of family life (16 projects); health and safety issues (14 projects); portfolio assessment techniques (4 projects); and multicultural curricula and instruction (2 projects).

The largest category of "other" inservice topics cited by projects, which we have labeled "Improving the quality of family life," encompasses the following issues: teaching staff when and how to intervene in cases of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and spousal abuse; interventions for children and families "at-risk," such as teaching families techniques for managing stress and building on family strengths; and educating staff about the special issues faced by children of divorce and single-parent families.

Inservice training in health and safety issues, reported by 14 project sites, involved educating Even Start staff to recognize and respond to a wide variety of illnesses and conditions so that they could, in turn, educate Even Start families about them. Some of the diseases cited, such as Hepatitis B and AIDS, may be more prevalent in the communities that projects serve than in the population as a whole. Other health issues addressed in inservice training are: childhood diseases; women's health; substance abuse; fetal alcohol syndrome; and epilepsy. Safety issues involve teaching families about ways to avoid common household accidents and building families' awareness of gang violence in their communities.

Inservice training of staff to use portfolio assessment, to develop multicultural curricula, and to develop ways to communicate with students from other cultures was reported by six projects. These inservice topics dealt specifically with improving the quality of projects' instructional program by improving the quality of the teachers on staff.

To What Extent Do Collaborating Agencies Provide the Core Educational Components?

This section addresses the question of who is primarily responsible for delivering various components of core educational services to participants--staff paid with Even Start funds, staff paid by agencies collaborating with Even Start, or staff from both. As a reminder, project instructors were considered as Even Start staff if any portion of their salaries was paid with Even Start funds.

The percentages listed under the "Even Start" column of Exhibit 9.15 indicate that projects tend to focus their in-house staff resources in certain educational areas more than others. Specifically, the majority of projects rely exclusively on Even Start staff to administer parenting education and early childhood education for children under age 3. In contrast, staff resources provided by collaborating agencies play a greater role in all levels of adult education and early childhood education for children older than 2. This pattern of focusing Even Start resources is consistent with projects reporting the relative scarcity of parenting education and educational services for infants and toddlers, aside from Even Start, in their communities.

Exhibit 9.15.

Percent of Project Sites Using Even Start and Collaborating Agency Staff to Provide Core Educational Components (1994-95)

	Even Start	Other Agency	Both	Neither	Sites Not Reporting
Adult Education					
Beginning ABE (0-4)	31%	28%	22%	4%	14%
Intermediate ABE (5-8)	31%	30%	22%	3%	13%
ASE/GED preparation (9-12)	30%	34%	23%	2%	11%
ESL	20%	25%	16%	13%	26%
Parenting Education	58%	4%	27%	<1%	11%
Early Childhood Education					
Under age 3	61%	8%	15%	4%	12%
Age 3 and 4	44%	13%	33%	1%	9%
Age 5	28%	25%	32%	4%	12%
Age 6 and 7	19%	30%	26%	10%	15%

Note: The percentages are based on the 567 project sites operated by the 476 projects included in evaluation analyses.
Exhibit reads: 31 percent of Even Start project sites relied solely on Even Start paid staff to conduct beginning adult education services in 1994-95.

As indicated in Exhibit 9.15 and Exhibit 9.16, Even Start families received adult basic education from either Even Start instructors, or instructors working for other agencies, or from both. Less than 5 percent of projects reported that neither Even Start nor a collaborating agency provided adult education, with the exception of ESL training. Thirteen percent of projects reported that neither Even Start nor one of its collaborating agencies provided ESL instruction. This occurs because families in need of ESL training tend to be concentrated in certain areas of the country; hence, projects vary in terms of their families' needs for ESL instruction.

Exhibit 9.16. Percent of Project Sites Using Even Start and Collaborating Agency Staff to Provide Core Educational Components (1994-95)

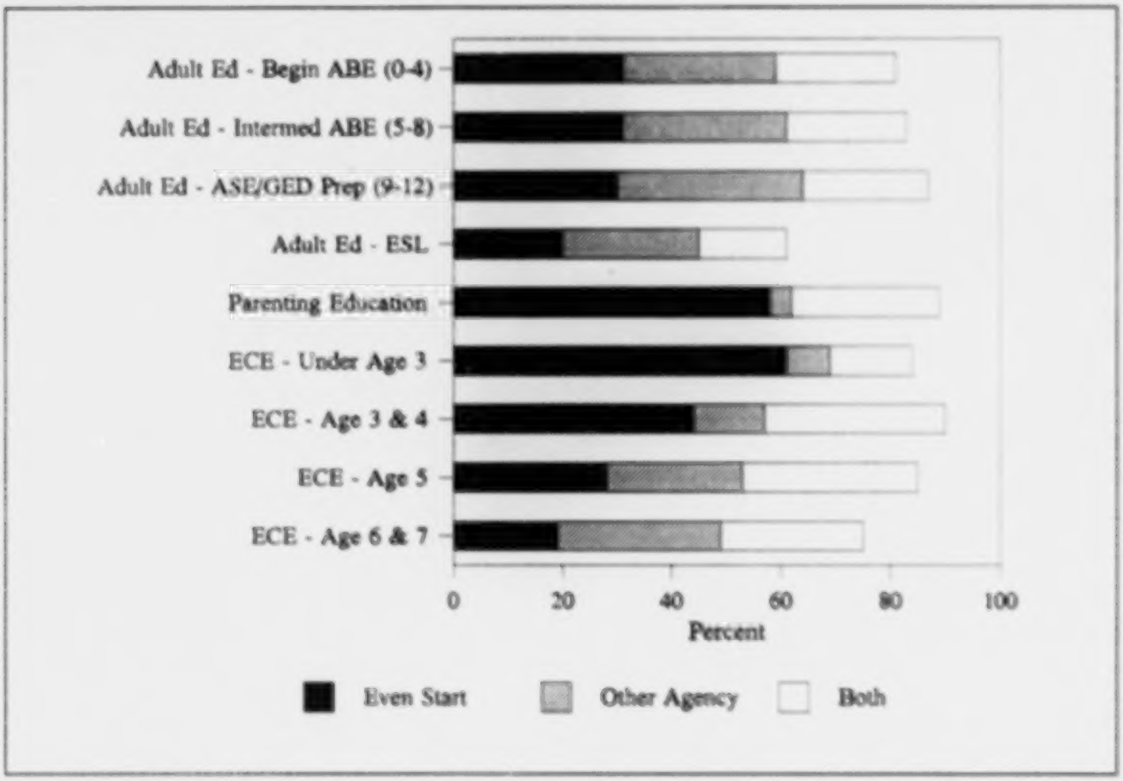

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 31 percent of Even Start project sites relied solely on staff paid by Even Start funds in the beginning adult basic education program; 22 percent of project sites used staff paid by Even Start and staff from collaborating agencies in the beginning ABE component.

Further, Exhibit 9.17 shows that departments in public school systems (other than the specific departments sponsoring Even Start) and colleges and universities serve as primary providers of adult education curricula for 38 and 20 percent of project sites, respectively. These organizations also play a key role as secondary providers of adult education (35 and 37 percent, respectively) joined also by trade/technical schools (29 percent), government agencies (41 percent), volunteer groups (53 percent), and other community groups (47 percent).

Exhibit 9.15 shows that 58 percent of project sites teach parenting education in-house, and another 27 percent supplement Even Start parent educators with staff from a collaborating agency. Only 4 percent of project sites rely exclusively on a collaborating agency to provide parenting education.

Exhibit 9.17. Percent of Project Sites That Have Collaborating Agencies as the Primary or Secondary Provider of Adult Education Services (1994-95)

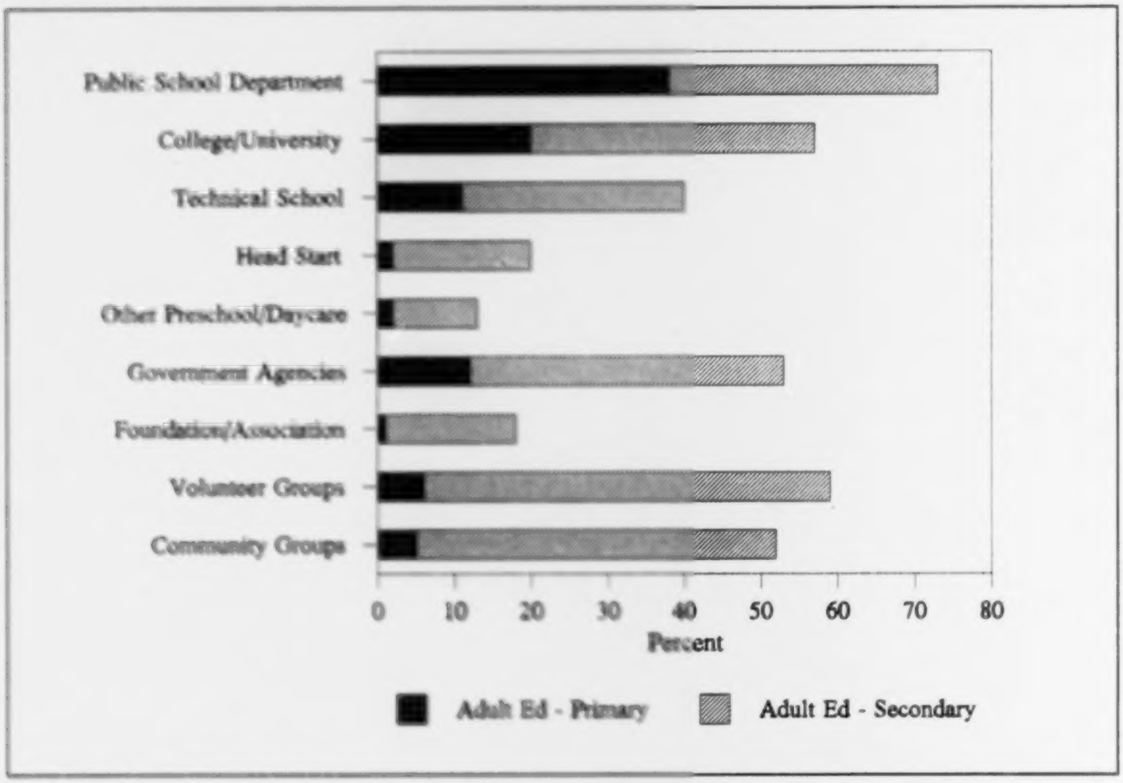

Exhibit reads: Departments in public school systems served as primary providers of adult education curricula for 38 percent of project sites in 1994-95.

Consistent with the tendency among Even Start projects to use in-house staff for parenting education, not many collaborating agencies serve as primary providers of parenting education (see Exhibit 9.18). However, various types of organizations contribute parenting education services as secondary providers including: other departments within public school system (51 percent); government agencies (54 percent); other community groups (55 percent); Head Start programs (47 percent); and volunteer groups (42 percent).

Sixty-one percent of project sites had only Even Start staff deliver early childhood education for children under age three (see Exhibit 9.15). Collaborating agencies provide all of the education services for infants and toddlers in 8 percent of project sites. For 3- and 4-year-olds, the percentage of project sites that provide early childhood education classes using only Even Start instructors is 44 percent, while one-third share responsibility with a collaborating agency.

Exhibit 9.18. Percent of Project Sites That Have Collaborating Agencies as the Primary or Secondary Provider of Parenting Education Services (1994-95)

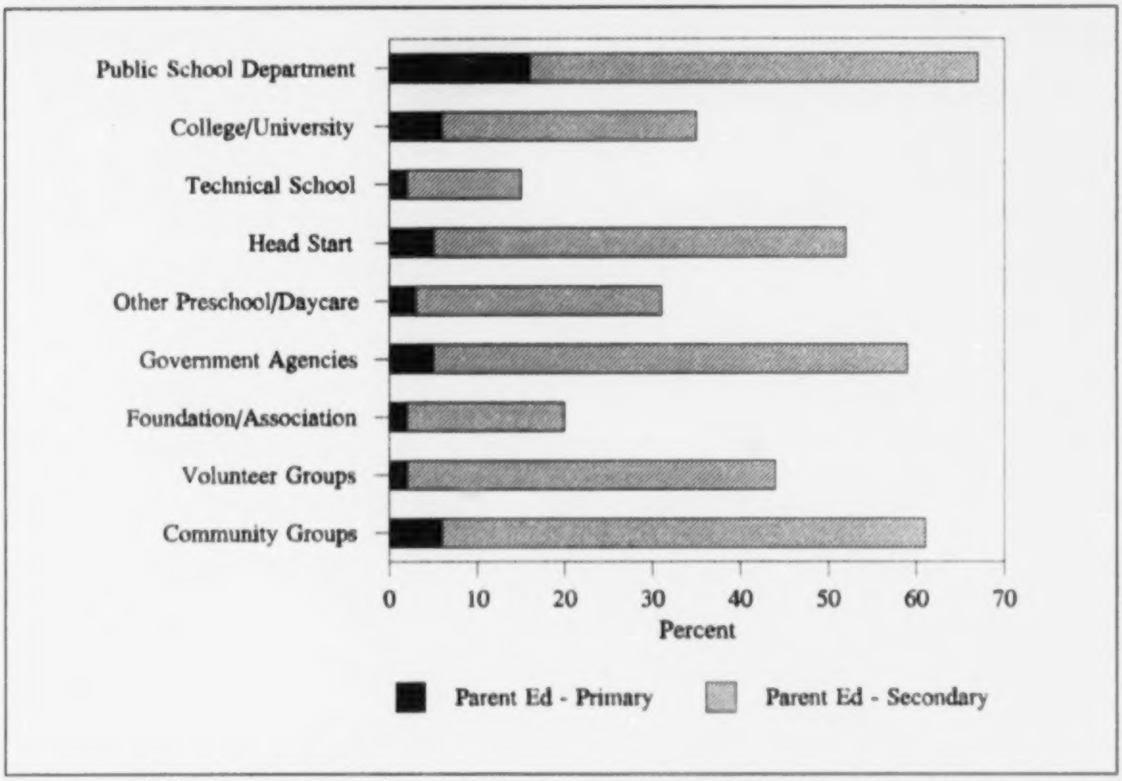

Exhibit reads: Departments in public school systems served as secondary providers of parenting education curricula for 51 percent of project sites in 1994-95.

As children in Even Start progress into the two oldest age groups (age 5; age 6-7), an increasing number of projects utilize other agencies as the primary provider of early childhood education. Thirty-two percent of projects use both Even Start and other agencies to teach 5 year-olds, and 25 percent of project sites have collaborating agencies teach all 5 year-olds. By the time Even Start children reach 6 or 7 years of age, less than one-fifth of Even Start project sites provide early childhood education services in-house, and almost one-third (30 percent) of sites turn them over to an external provider. Most likely, this is because there are more services available to older children through non-Even Start agencies, such as public elementary schools in the LEA.

Likewise, in most communities, adult basic education programs already exist, and these data indicate that Even Start projects are taking advantage of their availability. Education services for parenting and for very young children are considerably more scarce, and Even Start projects wisely focus their resources in these areas.

For early childhood education, some projects rely on three types of organizations to serve as primary providers of services (see Exhibit 9.19). They are: other departments within the public school system (35 percent of project sites); Head Start programs (22 percent); and other preschool or day care programs (18 percent). Generally, collaborating agencies serve as secondary providers of early childhood education. The key contributors in this role are: Head Start (52 percent); other preschool and day care programs (46 percent of project sites); other departments within the public school system (44 percent); other community groups (43 percent); volunteer groups (39 percent); and government agencies (37 percent).

Exhibit 9.19. Percent of Project Sites That Have Collaborating Agencies as the Primary or Secondary Providers of Early Childhood Education Services (1994-95)

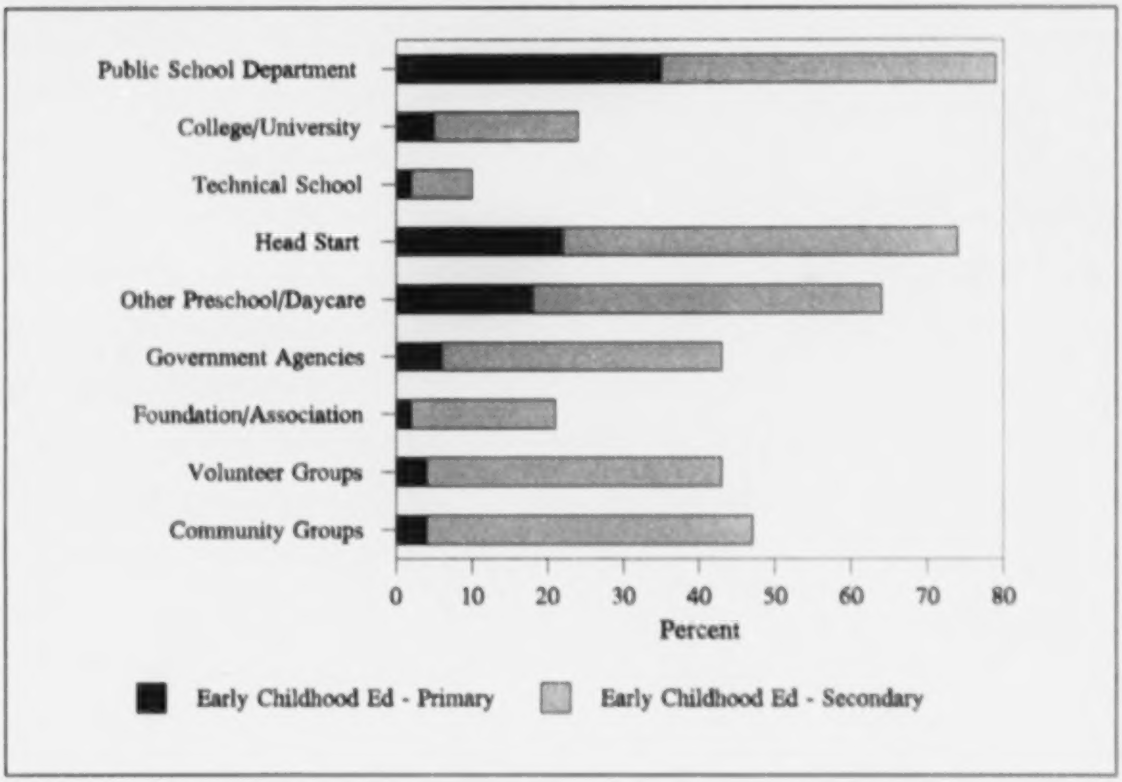

Exhibit reads: Departments in public school systems served as primary providers of early childhood education curricula for 35 percent of project sites in 1994-95.

Exhibit 9.20 describes the instructors of Even Start students in terms of the source of their salaries (Even Start, local matching funds, or collaborating agency) and in terms of the amount of contact they have with Even Start students (whether they work full-time or part-time; whether they teach Even Start students exclusively or both Even Start and other students).

As Exhibit 9.20 shows, the three to four instructors staffing the "typical" Even Start project are paid almost entirely with federal Even Start funds. They are either full- or part-time instructors who teach Even Start students exclusively. In 90 percent of projects, there is no incidence of an Even Start instructor who only teaches Even Start students and whose salary is paid for exclusively with local matching funds or by a collaborating agency. In most projects, there is no more than one instructor whose salary is paid solely or mostly with matching or by a collaborating agency; typically, this instructor works either full- or part-time and teaches both Even Start and other students.

Exhibit 9.20.

Number of Instructors, by Salary Source and Student Contact (1994-95)

	Paid by Even Start Funds		Paid by Local Match		Paid by Collaborating Agency	
Teaching Assignment	**Average**	**Number in 90% of Projects**	**Average**	**Number in 90% of Projects**	**Average**	**Number in 90% of Projects**
Full-time instructor, teaching mostly Even Start students	1.6	0-4	0.2	0	0.2	0
Part-time instructor, teaching mostly Even Start students	1.7	0-5	0.4	0-1	0.4	0-1
Full-time instructor, teaching Even Start and other students	0.1	0	0.7	0-1	0.6	0-1
Part-time instructor, teaching Even Start and other students	0.2	0	0.6	0-1	0.6	0-1
Total	3.6	1-8	1.9	0-5	1.8	0-5

Exhibit reads: Even Start projects had an average of 1.6 full-time instructors (paid by Even Start funds) who taught mostly Even Start students in 1994-95.

Finally, project directors provided a global assessment of their overall satisfaction with their relationships with their collaborating agencies (see Exhibit 9.21). Nearly all projects (95 percent) reported that "all" or "many" of their collaborating relationships are satisfactory. Only 4 percent reported that "few" of their collaborative partnerships are satisfactory, and only 1 percent (just three projects) reported that "none" are satisfactory. (These percentages are nearly identical to project directors' satisfaction ratings for 1993-94.)

Exhibit 9.21.

Degree of Satisfaction with Collaborative Arrangements (1994-95)

	Number of Project Sites	Percent of Project Sites
All were satisfactory	196	41%
Many were satisfactory	258	54%
Few were satisfactory	17	4%
None were satisfactory	3	1%

Note: The percentages are based on the project sites operated by the 476 projects included in evaluation analyses. Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 41 percent of Even Start project sites reported that all of their collaborative arrangements were satisfactory.

What Are Major Challenges in Implementing Even Start?

Exhibit 9.22 displays a list of 17 potential barriers to successful implementation of Even Start programs and whether they present a "big problem," "some problem," or "no problem" to Even Start projects (see also Exhibit 9.23). The following five issues present "big problems" for at least one-fifth of projects: improving attendance (32 percent); improving participants' retention or motivation (28 percent); arranging or providing adequate transportation (27 percent); obtaining sufficient financial resources (24 percent); and obtaining adequate facilities, space, or equipment (21 percent). These issues are the same five cited by projects in 1993-94 as their biggest problems.

The five issues that were least often cited as problems are: working within the confines of the local model; finding the core education services locally; hiring and retaining qualified staff; and understanding or working within the state and federal guidelines. Between 43 and 51 percent of projects have at least "some problems" with these issues.

In addition to having project directors report on the extent of barriers in implementing their programs, we also asked them to report any solutions they had found to overcome these obstacles. Exhibit 9.24 lists innovative and/or frequently mentioned solutions that projects found to be of help in overcoming each barrier. Solutions offered by projects regarding the five issues that emerged as major barriers are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Exhibit 9.22.

Percent of Projects Reporting Barriers to Program Implementation (1994-95)

	No Problem	Some Problem	Big Problem
Recruiting eligible families	38%	49%	13%
Recruiting families most in need	43%	44%	14%
Improving retention or motivation of participants	9%	63%	28%
Improving attendance	6%	62%	32%
Coordinating with other agencies	38%	52%	10%
Obtaining sufficient financial resources	26%	51%	24%
Understanding or meeting national evaluation requirements	38%	50%	12%
Meeting local evaluation requirements	47%	45%	8%
Hiring and retaining qualified staff	51%	36%	13%
Obtaining adequate facilities, space, or equipment	36%	43%	21%
Arranging or providing adequate transportation	28%	45%	27%
Meeting social service needs of families	27%	63%	10%
Finding quality child care	41%	43%	16%
Understanding or working within the federal regulations	49%	45%	6%
Understanding or working within state guidelines	50%	45%	5%
Working within the confines of the local model	57%	38%	6%
Finding adult education, parenting education, or early childhood services locally	56%	36%	8%

Note: The percentages are based on the number of projects responding to each item listed above. About 2 to 4 percent of the 476 projects included in the evaluation analyses did not respond.
Exhibit reads: 38 percent of Even Start projects reported that recruiting eligible families was not a problem in program implementation in 1994-95.

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Exhibit 9.23. Percent of Projects Reporting Barriers to Program Implementation (1994-95)

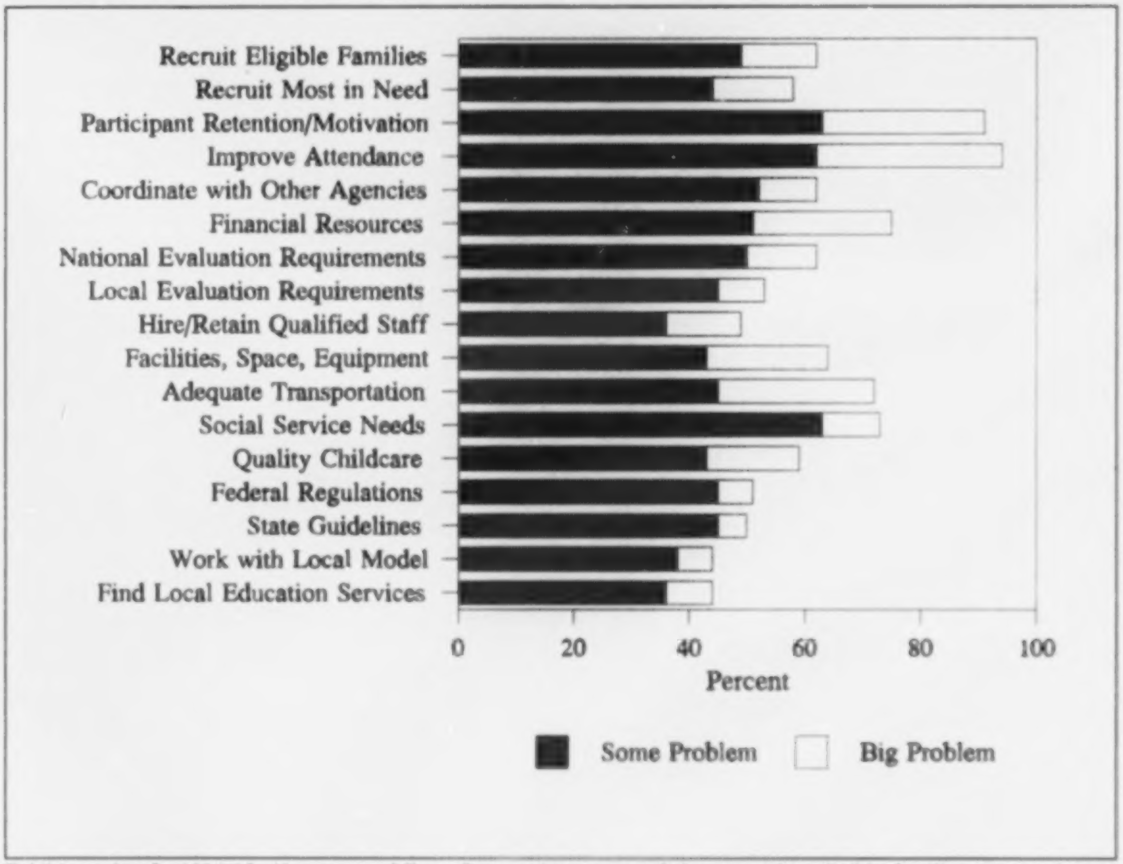

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 49 percent of Even Start projects reported that recruiting eligible families presented some problems in program implementation.

Improving Attendance

The solutions that projects found to this problem overlap with solutions to improve participants' retention and motivation, primarily involving the use of rewards, incentives, and providing relevant and flexible program schedule. Some of the "solutions" pertain to the initial screening of families that are truly interested in participating in Even Start. Once enrolled, projects have provided individual, specialized counseling to families having attendance problems as well as applied "peer pressure" and arranged for peer support by families that are participating fully. Informing families that they may be dropped from the program after a certain number of absences sometimes improves attendance.

Improving Participants' Retention and Motivation

As we saw in the section in Chapter Five on the reasons families gave for dropping out of Even Start, participating families face a variety of issues and obstacles that may cause them to drop out of the program before they attain their educational goals. Projects that have found some solutions suggest the following strategies to counteract this problem. As mentioned above, the strategy begins with a careful screening of families before enrollment. Specific steps taken in this phase that contribute to improving retention and motivation later include making sure that parents clearly understand the program goals and requirements and the drawing up of participation contracts. However, most of the solutions reported pertain to the post-enrollment period and involve providing frequent and individualized contacts with families, frequent progress feedback, support services; opportunities for students to participate in program planning, and incentives and recognition of progress.

Obtaining Sufficient Financial Resources

Solutions to this problem focused on maximizing the services and personnel resources available from collaborating agencies, tapping new sources of funds such as private foundations, conducting fundraising such as garage sales and collecting donations, and conducting awareness campaign for the Even Start program in the state.

Meeting Social Service Needs of Families

Suggested solutions to this barrier generally fall in three, closely related areas. One is to make maximal use of specialized expertise of personnel from collaborating agencies. Another approach is to increase the Even Start staff's skills in dealing with social service needs of families through inservice training and attending other training opportunities. The third general approach is to empower the Even Start families to more effectively tap into social services that are available to them. Some of the specific steps in this approach include developing a resource guide of available social services and placing it in every adult education classroom, developing support groups of parents to network together to obtain needed services, and offering a month-long orientation period to assist families in accessing the social services they need.

Transportation

Ninety-nine projects reported ways by which they dealt with a lack of transportation. The preferred solution to the transportation barrier was for projects to purchase their own van, mini-bus, or other large passenger vehicle. However, for many projects, the cost of doing so was prohibitive; in these cases, other arrangements had to be made. For example, projects reported encouraging car pooling among families, forming local transportation cooperatives, contracting with the local public transportation system to subsidize fares for Even Start families, and moving program sites closer to participants' homes and providing home-based services whenever possible. More examples of solutions to this problem as well as other barriers are included in Exhibit 9.24.

Exhibit 9.24.

Solutions to Implementation Barriers (1994-95)

Recruiting Eligible Families (121 projects)

- Go door-to-door; go to gathering places, like food banks, WIC clinics, state unemployment offices
- Word of mouth/flyers
- Interagency collaboration
- Use "model" Even Start families to recruit others to participate
- Emphasize recruitment when training staff
- Provide services in convenient locations; help with transportation
- Adapt services to participants' needs and interests

Recruiting Families Most in Need (61 projects)

- Provide incentives
- Collaborate with other social service agencies
- Use the Head Start waiting list for leads
- Get referrals from school counselors and social workers
- Develop a "point system" to prioritize families according to needs

Improving Retention or Motivation of Participants (157 projects)

- Incentives (open house back to school with free school supplies, transportation, meals, child care) to recognize participants' hard work and progress
- Provide transportation and child care; home tutors; flexible class times
- Provide rewards/support (recognition luncheon for GED graduates)
- Have frequent personal contact
- Adapt curriculum and instruction to increase relevancy to families' cultural heritage; involve parents as helpers; offer choice of classes
- Target recruitment on smaller group of committed participants
- Require parents to participate in order for their children to receive services

Improving Attendance (173 projects)

- Enforce mandatory counseling sessions to correct tardiness and/or repeated absences
- Reschedule classes at more convenient times; provide transportation
- Schedule special events during periods of low attendance to keep interest high
- If attendance falls below a minimum level, drop from the entire program
- Immediate follow up about absentees
- Have adult students choose "attendance buddies" to follow up on absences
- Use orientation period to separate out committed from non-committed participants and focus efforts on the former

Exhibit 9.24. (Continued)

Solutions to Implementation Barriers (1994-95)

Coordinating with Other Agencies (74 projects)

- Initiate inter-school, inter-agency council
- Obtain a state grant to form an inter-agency council to serve "at risk" families
- Collaborate with other agencies in sharing staff, materials; work out in-kind contributions, share inservice training
- Ask state Department of Education collaboration specialist for help
- Make presentations to other agencies; serve on board and advisory committees to other agencies and invite their representatives to be part of Even Start board

Obtaining Sufficient Financial Resources (87 projects)

- Conduct fundraisers
- Share materials and staff with collaborating agencies
- Apply for other grants
- Collaborate with school district, other agencies, and state Department of ED in seeking additional funds for multi-agency model for service delivery
- Solicit local business and community organizations

Understanding or Meeting National and Local Evaluation Requirements (54 and 28 projects)

- Attend conferences
- Hire an evaluation consultant

Hiring and Retaining Qualified Staff (43 projects)

- Target or expand recruitment: hire graduates of Even Start, retired teachers, and part-time staff from collaborating agencies; go outside of local school district or community
- Make staff training and development a top priority; develop individual staff professional growth plans
- Implement a new staffing plan or staff restructuring; upgrade staff positions and realign responsibilities; revise job descriptions and pay schedules; cross-train staff; focus on team building; hire all new staff
- Intensify screening of job applicants; lengthen probationary period
- Collaborate with local school district, other programs, and universities to share qualified staff

Obtaining Adequate Facilities, Space, or Equipment (87 projects)

- Rotate children's play groups between clients' homes; provide education services in the home
- Scale down project model to fit with available sites
- Apply for additional grant funds from other state and federal agencies
- Access the Internet to increase technological capabilities
- Forge a relationship with Private Industry Council to have use of JTPA computer lab for ESL/GED training
- Arrange for reduced rent or donated space; reschedule classes to fit times when facilities and space are available
- Use other agencies' space as part of collaborative agreement
- Hold classes and events at public buildings, such as the community center, school, public library, and churches

Exhibit 9.24. (Continued)

Solutions to Implementation Barriers (1994-95)

Arranging or Providing Adequate Transportation (99 projects)

- Purchase large passenger vehicle
- Arrange for parents and children to ride the public school bus
- Encourage car pools among families; reimburse parents for gas mileage, provide transportation stipends; join local community motor pool; help families to buy infant car seats
- Rent buses or vans from school district and local college; have staff members earn their CDL license
- Arrange to use buses or vans owned by collaborating agencies; coordinate with other programs that already have bus runs
- Move program sites closer to participants' homes and provide home-based services whenever possible
- Create the staff position of Transportation Aide to make arrangements on a case-by-case basis
- Form local transportation cooperatives; contract with the local public transportation system to subsidize fares for Even Start families; negotiate contract with local taxi company
- Offer drivers education classes to Even Start parents and adults
- Have staff use their own vehicles to transport families
- Collaborate with public assistance office to provide Even Start families with bus tokens
- Expand Community Loan program to help families purchase cars

Meeting Social Service Needs of Families (38 projects)

- Collaborate with other local social service agencies to share referrals and staff inservice on social service needs; form an inter-agency council to address needs; form a consortium of social service agencies
- Refine the referral process; use computer system to link with other providers for referrals and intake; develop a family resource guide of available social services
- Develop collaborative support groups to help parents network together and within the community; invite collaborating agency representatives to Even Start parent groups
- Establish case management system; conduct on-going needs assessment of Even Start families; use the orientation period to assist families in accessing the social services to meet their needs
- Allow college students to do their family counseling internships at Even Start

Finding Quality Child Care (53 projects)

- Help families arrange for child care in their communities; work with the local community to obtain more early childhood education facilities; distribute a list of qualified child/day care providers from Department of Human Resources
- Arrange for school district to open its child care program/center to Even Start parents
- Refer parents to other agencies that hold adult education classes at times when they can attend
- Apply for child care grant to establish on-site day care center; set up volunteer program using high school seniors and interns from community college as child care aides; arrange for Even Start volunteers and aides to provide child care for scheduled events
- Allow parents to bring their infants to class
- Subcontract out child care to existing providers; work with day care agencies that accept vouchers; provide families with child care stipend
- Provide core services in participants' homes
- Lower minimum age for children to enter Even Start
- Collaborate with other programs like Head Start that provide child care
- Work out plan for Even Start parents to share in caring for each other's children; help Even Start "graduates" to establish child care centers in their homes

Exhibit 9.24. (Continued) **Solutions to Implementation Barriers (1994-95)**
Understanding and Working Within the Federal Guidelines (21 projects) • Call state monitor for clarification • Request copies of Adult Education Act, C.F.R.'s and federal registers from the previous ED contractor • Attend Even Start conferences pertaining to national evaluation, guidelines • Network with other programs to share solutions and resolve questions
Understanding or Working Within the State Guidelines (13 projects) • Work with network of state directors' to improve communication with CDC Even Start office • Work closely with the state Department of Public Instruction • Use letters, phone calls and meetings to express concerns individually and as part of a regional group • Rearrange daily schedule and staff duties to accommodate to state requirements
Working Within the Confines of the Local Model (17 projects) • Redesign program to build in flexibility (e.g., [illegible] needs) • Work directly with public school superintendent • Keep in direct contact with state coordinator • Consult a local evaluator • Use fresh ideas from new staff members in interpreting the local model
Finding Adult, Parenting, or Early Childhood Education Services Locally (17 projects) • Train Even Start instructors to teach adult education and parenting education for collaborating agencies as well • Team with school district to provide adult basic education and GED classes at the school • Collaborate with other local agencies and programs like Head Start that provide early childhood and parenting education • Participate in recently implemented county-wide adult education and literacy program • Within Even Start, integrate adult basic education into parenting education to compensate for lack of ABE in community • Arrange to have access to local college's ABE Learning Center; use college students as adult education tutors • Send Even Start staff to Head Start for training in early childhood education

What Are Projects' Technical Assistance Needs?

Project directors were asked to rate their needs for technical assistance in the areas of program operations, educational services, support services, and evaluation (see Exhibit 9.25). With some exceptions, only a few projects reported a "great need" for technical assistance in most issues. Overall, five topics for which the projects indicated the most need for technical assistance were: increasing participant involvement or retention; improving retention; using computers; funding; and preparing for the PEP/NDN effectiveness validation.

Program Operations

In the area of program operations, projects' top technical assistance need was for help in increasing participant involvement and retention, cited as a "great" need by 19 percent of projects and as a moderate need by another 62 percent (see Exhibit 9.25). Seventy-two percent of projects needed at least some help with funding or fiscal issues, and 67 percent expressed at least some need for assistance with staff development. Fifty-four percent of projects needed help with both recruitment and interagency collaboration. Only 1 percent expressed a strong need for technical assistance in program administration, and 40 percent expressed some need in this area.

Educational Services

Between 51 and 78 percent of projects expressed "some need" or "great need" for technical assistance in the ten areas that pertained to providing educational services. Improving participant retention emerged as the top need for educational services with 21 percent of projects rating it as a great need and another 57 percent reporting some need in this area. Seventy-three percent of projects had some need for help in using computers, and 68 percent of projects needed some help in sharing information with other projects and identifying effective educational practices. Relatively few projects indicated "great need" for help with selecting or implementing curriculum materials (4 percent) and approaches to early childhood education (2 percent). It will be recalled from the section on program designs in Chapter Four that Even Start projects can model their services on any of a vast number of educational programs and curricula for children, adults, and/or whole families.

Support Services

We reported in Chapter Four that 78 percent of Even Start projects indicated that some or many of their participating families were in need of transportation. Transportation was second only to families' needs for child care. Consistent with those results, solving transportation problems emerged here as a "great need" for one-fifth of projects and as a moderate need for 40 percent of projects.

Sixty-one percent of projects needed at least some help in handling participants' social and health problems, and 58 percent needed help in maintaining balance in the provision of educational and support services. However, less than 10 percent of projects reported that either of these issues were "great" needs.

Exhibit 9.25.

Areas in Need of Technical Assistance (1994-95)

	No Need	Some Need	Great Need
Program Operations			
Program administration	59%	40%	1%
Interagency collaboration	46%	48%	6%
Funding or fiscal issues	28%	53%	19%
Recruiting families	46%	45%	9%
Increasing participant involvement or retention	19%	62%	19%
Staff development	33%	61%	6%
Educational Services			
Sharing information with other projects	33%	59%	9%
Selecting or implementing curriculum materials	45%	50%	4%
Integrating program components	45%	47%	8%
Improving retention	22%	57%	21%
Identifying effective practices	32%	61%	7%
Approaches to adult education	36%	55%	8%
Approaches to parenting education	36%	58%	6%
Approaches to early childhood education	49%	49%	2%
Making home visits	44%	48%	8%
Using computers	26%	54%	19%
Support Services			
Solving transportation problems	41%	40%	20%
Handling social or health problems	39%	54%	7%
Maintaining balance of educational and support services	42%	52%	6%
Evaluation			
Local evaluation	49%	41%	10%
National evaluation requirements (ESIS)	44%	49%	7%
Administering and scoring assessment instruments	47%	45%	9%
Validation by the National Center for Family Literacy National	36%	42%	22%
Preparing a PEP/NDN submission	38%	36%	26%

Note: The percentages are based on the number of projects responding to each item listed above.
Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 59 percent of Even Start projects indicated that they had no need for technical assistance in the area of program administration.

Evaluation

All Even Start projects are required to conduct an independent local evaluation. Between 51 and 64 percent of projects expressed some need for technical assistance in evaluating their projects. Preparing a submission for PEP/NDN and getting validated by the National Center for Family Literacy were rated as great needs by 26 and 22 percent of projects, respectively.

Other Needs for Technical Assistance

Project directors were also given the opportunity to cite any other needs for technical assistance that were not subsumed by the issues listed for program operations, educational services, support services, and evaluation. In the area of program operations, several projects used the question as an opportunity to cite their specific difficulties in building true collaborative partnerships. These difficulties included "turf issues" and, among rural projects, geographic isolation. Projects also raised the issue of staffing as another area where technical assistance was needed; how to maintain staff morale was an issue for a number of projects.

In the area of evaluation, one project reported needing help with conducting a longitudinal study of families. Several project directors expressed frustration after searching in vain for assessment instruments appropriate for the families they serve. For example, one project had searched without success for assessment materials appropriate for ESL students with low levels of literacy in their native languages. Another project was in dire need of a language assessment instrument translated into Creole.

What Are Projects' Evaluation Activities and Future Plans?

In addition to their mandatory participation in the national evaluation, most Even Start projects (91 percent) reported that they conducted local evaluations in 1994-95. Judging from projects' responses (see Exhibit 9.26), most of these local evaluations were comprehensive in scope and covered several domains pertaining to program functioning, assessment, and participant outcomes. Over 90 percent of projects included in their local evaluations an assessment of participant gains in literacy and parenting skills; a detailed description of their participants, program services, and interagency collaborations; and an assessment of the extent to which they had implemented all of the program components proposed in their initial applications to Even Start. Eighty-six percent assessed the quality of the educational and support services they provided. Sixty-eight percent also included an assessment of the quality of staff training in their local evaluation.

Project directors were also asked to describe other components of their local evaluations. The formality of the local evaluations that projects reported ranged from the methodologically rigorous (e.g., "We have a control group") to the anecdotal. In the mid-range were a number of projects that creatively blended qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and report data on the status of their projects. For example, one project in Kentucky had parents look 15 years into the future to write a family "vision statement," which project staff have used as the basis for determining family members' incremental progress toward achieving their goals. Several other projects reported their progress in implementing portfolio assessment techniques.

Exhibit 9.26.

Projects Conducting a Local Evaluation (1994-95)

Components Included in Local Evaluations	Number of Projects	Percent of Projects
A detailed description of the participants, program services, and interagency collaborations	378	91%
Assessment of how adequately or completely you have implemented the proposed program components	378	91%
Assessment of the quality of the educational and support services provided	358	86%
Assessment of the quality of staff training and development	283	68%
Assessment of growth in child literacy, adult literacy, and parenting skills	384	92%

Note: The percentages are based on 417 projects reporting that they are conducting local evaluation.
Exhibit reads: 91 percent of Even Start projects in 1994-95 included a detailed description of program participants, services, and interagency collaboration activities in their local evaluations.

Some projects also described the outcome indicators they use to monitor the progress of their participants. In addition to commercially available standardized tests, projects mentioned other less formal indices that measure participants' increasing abilities to function in work and other settings. Most of these indices had as their theme participants' increased self-esteem and self-reliance. Some examples are listed below:

- Discontinued public assistance;
- Found a job or was promoted;
- Learned how to use a computer;
- Parent demonstrated use of positive discipline in the home;
- Obtained a library card for the first time;
- Entered substance abuse treatment;
- Enrolled in a community college program or vocational training program;
- Began attending parent-teacher conferences, volunteering as parent helper or field trip chaperon;
- Began helping child with his/her homework;
- Registered to vote or voted for the first time;
- Developed a hobby or interest;
- Attended to health and hygiene needs of self and family;

- Developed a stable living situation and regular daily routines; moved out of relative's home and into own home;
- Took steps to improve home safety;
- Got telephone service; and
- Obtained U.S. citizenship.

The data in Exhibit 9.27 indicate that 14 percent or fewer projects were planning to use their local evaluation results to make sweeping changes in their programs. Between 31 and 66 percent of projects were planning to make at least minor changes in their programs based on results of their local evaluation. Recruitment and screening, staffing and inservice training, and collaborative agreements were targets for at least minor changes by at least 60 percent of projects. Program administration was the area least likely to be slated for change.

Exhibit 9.27.

Percent of Projects Planning to Make Changes in Their Programs Next Year Based on Findings from Local Evaluations (1994-95)

	No Changes	Minor Changes	Major Changes
Program administration	69%	27%	4%
Recruitment and screening	34%	60%	6%
Basic model and curriculum	46%	47%	7%
Staffing and inservice	36%	55%	10%
Collaborative agreements	40%	50%	10%
Local evaluation	43%	43%	14%

Exhibit reads: 69 percent of Even Start projects in 1994-95 planned to make no changes in their programs the following year.

Ninety percent of Even Start projects planned to continue their programs after their current grant expires (see top of Exhibit 9.28). Three projects, or 1 percent, planned to close down, and 9 percent had no definite plans regarding continuation. Project directors were presented four potential strategies for continuing their programs, including an "Other" category, and asked to select all that applied. Eighty percent planned to apply for a new Even Start grant, 54 percent planned to obtain funding from foundations or corporate sources, and 46 percent planned to continue with local funds.

Exhibit 9.28.

Plans for Continuation After Current Multi-year Grant Expires (1994-95)

	Number of Projects	Percent of Projects
Plan to continue	410	90%
Plan to close the project	3	1%
Have no plans yet	43	9%
Strategies for continuing the program		
Carry on with local funds	215	46%
Obtain funding from foundations, corporations, or other sources	251	54%
Reapply for another Even Start demonstration grant	372	80%
Other	44	10%

Exhibit reads: In 1994-95, 90 percent of Even Start projects planned to continue Even Start services after the current grant expires.

Forty-four projects, or 10 percent, reported that they had another strategy for continuation. Upon examination, most of these responses were subsumed under the three continuation strategies already provided. Of the projects that provided a true alternative, strategies for continuation varied in specificity from "seeking to learn of possibilities but no definite options yet" to one project's plan to establish a not-for-profit book store to provide transitional employment for Even Start parents who had received their GED, while using the proceeds from book sales to fund the full complement of Even Start services. Four projects anticipated that they either would merge or collaborate with Head Start; two projects said that they were encouraging their state senators and congressmen to push for a modification of the federal legislation, which currently limits Even Start projects to two grant cycles; and one project described steps that staff had taken to expand their Even Start project to a county-wide service area.

Chapter Ten

Summary and Conclusions

The Even Start program has undergone a steady expansion in size and in the areas of service delivery, with the number of families growing from 2,500 families in 1989-90 to an estimated 31,000 in 1994-95. At the same time, many characteristics of the participating families have remained consistent. The descriptions of Even Start families over the last six years reveal that projects have continued across all years to serve families who are highly in need of the types of services Even Start provides.

Each year since the program's inception, approximately 60 new projects have joined the Even Start community. By 1994-95, there are indications that the program as a whole has succeeded in increasing the intensity of educational services and the levels of participation by parents and children in all three core educational components.

Similarly, the evaluation data collected to date show several promising effects of Even Start services on the educational gains of parents and children. Children in Even Start achieved significant gains on three different measures of cognitive development (the PSI, PPVT, and PLS-3), gains which were larger than would be expected on the basis of normal development. It is important to note that children in a randomly assigned control group, who received no program services, gained more slowly at first, but caught up with the Even Start children once they had their first experience in an organized school setting.

Even Start clearly contributed to greater attainment of a GED certificate by parents. Adults participating in Even Start also achieved significant gains on the CASAS and TABE tests, gains which are as large as those seen in other studies of low-income populations. However, adults in a randomly assigned control group also achieved gains, where such control group data were available. On a measure of parenting, Even Start families gained more than expected based on findings from another similar study.

The goal of this chapter is to summarize the key findings from the 1994-95 Even Start evaluation, with references to relevant information gained from the previous evaluation data. Placing the recent findings in the historical context, the chapter concludes with tentative observations regarding areas in which the program seems to be gaining efficiency and effectiveness.

Summary of Key Findings

The objective of this section is to build a coherent overview that links the essential information about Even Start participants, services that are offered, the extent of participation in services offered, the initial assessment on the effectiveness of the educational services, and the administrative and operational issues related to the implementation of the Even Start services.

Who are the Even Start families?

- For the 1994-95 program year, a total of 513 local Even Start projects were in operation. Of these, 476 projects reported serving over 28,500 families. Estimating the number of families for 37 projects that did not submit data, approximately 31,000 families were enrolled in the program. The number of families served has increased steadily in the last several years, keeping pace with the increasing number of projects.

- Most Even Start families are headed by couples (48 percent) or single parents (39 percent). The average family size of single-parent families is 5 persons; while families headed by couples average 6 persons, and extended families contain an average of 7 persons. Virtually all participating adults are parents, mostly mothers, of participating children.

- A majority of families (62 percent) have two or more children in the Even Start eligible age range (birth up to 8 years). The average age of children participating in Even Start is 4.4 years; 29 percent are between birth and 3; 42 percent are ages 3 to 5.

- Even Start parents are young, mostly in their 20's and 30's. The average age is 29 years; however, 9 percent of families have teenage parents, and 10 percent are headed by parents 40 years or older.

- The most common Even Start family structure is a two-parent family with parents between the ages of 20 and 39 and three or four children. Another large group of families are headed by single parents with two or three children.

What are the social, economic, and educational circumstances of Even Start families?

- Over 80 percent of Even Start families have annual incomes of less than $15,000; 40 percent have annual family incomes of less than $6,000. For 46 percent of families, the main source of income is wages from jobs. Forty-seven percent of families report government assistance as their primary source of income.

- The ethnic composition of Even Start participants has shifted considerably in the last two years. Now, the largest ethnic group is Hispanic (36 percent), an increase from 22 percent two years ago, followed by white, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American families, in descending order.

- Hispanic families are mostly concentrated in the southern and western regions of the country, in particular, Puerto Rico, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, California, Idaho, Colorado, and Nevada. African American Even Start families are mostly concentrated in the South, particularly in South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Virginia. Asian families comprise a relatively small percentage of the Even Start population and are concentrated in Hawaii, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

- Family structure and economic circumstances vary across ethnic groups. A majority of African American and Native American families in Even Start are headed by single parents and have annual family incomes of less than $9,000. Smaller percentages of Hispanic and Asian families are headed by single parents compared to the program average, and the majority of these families have incomes of $9,000 or more. The percentages of families receiving government assistance is highest among African American families, followed by Native American, white, Asian, and Hispanic families.

- While Hispanic and Asian families in Even Start are less impoverished as a group compared to other ethnic minority groups, many of them face difficulties associated with their recent immigrant status. More than one-third of Even Start parents, mostly Hispanic and Asian, speak languages other than English at home. About three-fourths of these parents do not speak, read, or understand English well, or at all.

- Parents enrolled in Even Start have a wide range of educational backgrounds. At the time of intake, 2 percent had no previous schooling; and 13 percent had only elementary school education. The largest percentage of parents had reached 10th to 12th grades in high school, but had not completed high school. Finally, 16 percent had completed high school, received a GED, and/or taken postsecondary courses.

- Educational backgrounds of Hispanic and Asian parents were lower than that of parents from other ethnic groups. Also, parents 40 years or older tended to have fewer years of education than younger parents.

- Although the primary source of income for 46 percent of families is wages earned, only 27 percent of parents were employed at the time of intake. Of the unemployed parents, many of whom were mothers, 45 percent were enrolled in educational programs other than Even Start, and 14 percent were actively seeking work.

- Improving their educational status is the most common reason for parents' enrolling in Even Start. The second most common reason was to learn English, followed closely by a desire to improve their child's chances for school success.

How are the families recruited and screened?

- In recruiting families, almost one-half of projects use criteria beyond the eligibility criteria specified by law. The most common targeting criteria are parents with no high school diploma, used by 86 percent of targeting projects, and families with children between ages 3 and 5 (74 percent of targeting projects).

- The most commonly used strategy for contacting families is by "word of mouth," followed by referrals from collaborating agencies. Before applicant families are officially enrolled in Even Start, nearly all projects take steps to verify legal eligibility. In addition, a large majority of projects conduct basic skills assessments of parents, and about one-half of projects assess the language development or school readiness of children.

What are the Even Start educational programs like?

- In designing the educational curricula, over half of the projects developed their own local model. However, other existing models that influenced many projects' program designs include: Kenan Trust Family Literacy model (51 percent of projects); High/Scope curriculum (48 percent); Parents as Teachers (PAT) (40 percent); and Head Start (34 percent).

- Intermediate and secondary level adult education programs tend to involve more functional literacy approaches than the beginning adult basic education or ESL programs. Life skills and parenting issues are incorporated in all levels of adult education. Vocational topics provide the context for secondary education programs more than the beginning or intermediate level programs.

- Major topics taught in parenting education are child-focused such as: information about child development; development of language and thinking, motor, and social skills; and child's safety and well-being. In addition, many projects address parent-related issues such as: parent's self-esteem; life skills; information about community and social services; and health and nutrition education. Lastly, almost all projects include parent-child literacy activities as part of their parenting education curriculum.

- The typical topics and issues addressed through parent-child joint activities include: reading and storytelling; language development exercises; children's social development; topics related to children's independence, self-discipline, and self-help skills; health and nutrition; early academic skills; arts and crafts; sensory stimulation; and gross motor activities.

What is the intensity of Even Start services offered?

- For the adult education component, the average scheduled hours range from 311 hours annually per student for ESL, to 367 hours per year for secondary education. The average scheduled hours for parenting education are 195 hours per year. Early childhood education hours projects offer range from 350 hours per year for infants and toddlers to 557 hours for 6- and 7-year old children. Even Start educational services are offered to children for an average of 10 months out of the year regardless of age group, and all age groups are scheduled to have about 3 hours per month of home-based instruction. The scheduled hours increased across all educational components from the previous year.

- Parent-child joint activities are implemented in various settings. On average, in a typical month, projects offer about 3 hours of joint activities in the home, about 7.5 hours in the center or classroom, and about 4 hours in special social functions such as field trips and special meals.

- To assist families in participating in Even Start services, a large majority of projects (89 percent) provide or arrange for child care; 75 percent offer center-based and home-based services, and 53 percent offer services during the day, evening, and weekend to accommodate parents' schedules.

- Overall, child care emerges as the most common type of support services Even Start families need, closely followed by transportation and food and nutrition assistance. Further, many or all families also need health care, family support, financial support, employment assistance, and case management.

To what extent did the families participate in the services offered?

- On average, Even Start families participated in slightly more than 8 home visits during the 1994-95 program year. However, the number of home visits ranged widely across families, some reporting nearly 100 visits during the year. Two-parent families participated in more home visits than single-parent families; families with parents aged 40 or older had more home visits than families with younger parents.

- Eighty-five percent of parents participated in adult education; this level has remained stable since 1992-93. The most common forms of adult education were secondary adult education and GED preparation.

- Among all parents, approximately 15 percent did not participate in any adult education services. The percentage of non-participants was higher for parents who already had a high school diploma or GED at the time of enrollment.

- Across all parents, including those who did not participate, the average hours of participation in adult education was 92 for the entire program year. For the parents who participated, the average was 100 hours.

- Single parents spent more hours (average 107 hours) in adult education than parents from extended or two-parent families. Regardless of family structure, parents with two or fewer children participated more in adult education than parents with more than two children.

- Parents who entered Even Start with some postsecondary education spent more hours in adult education compared to parents who entered with a high school diploma or GED but had no postsecondary education. Parents in the 40 or older age group spent more hours in adult education than parents in all other, younger age groups.

- Average hours spent in adult education was the highest among Asian parents, second highest among African American parents, followed by Hispanic and white parents. Native American parents had the lowest average participation hours.

- Eighty-eight percent of parents participated in some form of parenting education. Among participating parents, the average rate of participation was 32 hours for the program year. Excluding non-participants, 50 percent of parents spent 17 hours or less in parenting education, while the top 10 percent spent 82 hours or more, and the top 1 percent spent 215 or more hours annually.

- Again, single parents spent significantly more time in parenting education than couples with children or parents with extended families. Parenting education hours decreased significantly with parents' age, with teenage parents participating, on average, 25 hours for the program year. Asian parents spent the most hours in parenting education while Native American parents participated for the fewest hours of all parents.

- Overall, 96 percent of children participated in some form of early childhood education. The most common forms of services were structured, center-based programs and individualized, home-based programs.

- Almost one-third of children participated for 1 to 3 months. The majority of children participated in early childhood education for 7 months or longer, and 26 percent participated for 10 to 12 months.

- Children in the age range of preschool to mid-elementary school grades participated in early childhood education for more months than infants/toddlers or children ages 10 or older. Asian children had the longest participation periods, and Native American children had the shortest participation records.

- The majority of children who participated had solid attendance records; 76 percent were absent rarely or only occasionally.

How many families participated in all three core components?

- Eighty percent of families participated in all three core components: adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education programs.

- Two-parent families had higher rates of participation in all core components than single-parent families or extended families. Parents 40 or older were slightly less likely to participate in all three core components than parents ages 20-29 years. Families with parents who already had a high school diploma, GED, or postsecondary education at the time of enrollment were less likely to participate in all three core components than families in which parents had less education.

- Across ethnic groups, Native American families had significantly higher rates of participation in all three core components than other ethnic minority groups.

What support services did families receive?

- The support services most commonly received by Even Start parents were: child care; transportation; family support; and meals. The services that children most commonly received were: child care; meals; and transportation.

- Children in single-parent families received more support services than children living with both parents or in extended families. Children from families with more than three children received more support services than children from families with fewer children. Hispanic children received the most support services, followed by Native American children.

- A relatively small percentage of Even Start children (12 percent) have special needs. The three most common special needs are speech/language impairment, developmental delays, and specific learning disabilities.

What were the patterns of retention? What were the reasons for families leaving the Even Start program?

- Across all families, the rate of retention in Even Start was 64 percent. However, among families that left the program, 13 percent (or about 5 percent of the total) had reached their planned educational goals. Thus, about 70 percent of families were still participating or had successfully completed the program at year end.

- A higher percentage of couples with children and extended families continued to participate at year end or successfully completed the program compared to single-parent families.

- Families headed by parents with extremely low or relatively high levels of education were more likely to be continuing the program at year end or to have successfully completed the program than parents who had some high school education before enrolling in Even Start. The rates of retention/completion were higher for parents 40 or older than for families with younger parents.

- The single most common reason for discontinuing participation (16 percent of those that exited) was families moving out of the service area. A total of 38 percent of termination was due to negative reasons, notably poor attendance, lack of interest, and family problems or crises preventing participation.

- Families headed by single parents were more likely to exit for negative reasons than were extended or two-parent families. Families with parents who either had very low or relatively high educational backgrounds were less likely to exit for negative reasons than parents with some high school education. Families with parents below the age of 30 were more likely to exit for negative reasons than families headed by older parents.

Do projects serve the families most in need? What are the characteristics of families most in need?

- Even Start families in urban areas report higher levels of extreme need than families in mixed or rural communities. The level of extreme need is highest among African American families, followed by Asian, Native American, Hispanic, and white families.

- The percent of extremely needy families differs across projects. While the overall average was 55 percent, one-quarter of projects had 73 percent or more of their families having extremely high levels of need.

- In general, projects' service delivery approaches do not seem to differ according to the prevalence of extremely needy families in the program. One exception is that projects with higher percentages of extremely needy families tended to offer significantly more scheduled contact hours for adult education and parenting education compared to projects with lower percentages of extremely needy families.

What were the participation outcomes of families most in need?

- Extremely needy families spent significantly more hours in adult education and parenting education activities than less needy families. The length of participation by children in the early childhood component was lower among extremely needy families than in less needy families. However, the average lengths for both groups were in the range of 6 to 7 months. Similarly, even though children from extremely needy families tended to be absent more often than children from less needy families, their average data represent only "occasional absences."

- The extremely needy families were more likely to participate in all three core components of Even Start than less needy families, although all percentages were in the range of 80 to 83 percent.

- In spite of more hours of participation, a higher percentage of extremely needy families left the program without meeting their goals compared to less needy families. Even so, 68 percent of extremely needy families were still in the program or had successfully completed the program at year's end.

What were the educational and developmental outcomes of Even Start participants?

- On the PreSchool Inventory which measures school readiness, Even Start children achieved a large gain (nearly one standard deviation in approximately seven months). This is comparable to the gains seen in the earlier Even Start evaluation as well as in other high-quality preschool programs.

- Children also made significant gains on the Preschool Language Scale in both auditory comprehension and expressive communication, with moderate effect sizes (approximately one-third of a standard deviation). At pretest, the scores for Even Start children were approximately 6 months below their expected age levels compared to national norms; by the posttest, this negative difference had been reduced by half.

- Parents' scores on the HOME Screening Questionnaire increased significantly from pretest to posttest for both parents of children less than 3 years old and for parents of children 3 to 6 years old. These are moderate gains of approximately one-half a standard deviation. These gains are much larger than those seen among a control group of low-income parents participating in a national family support program.

- Adults' basic skill levels were assessed by either the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) or the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Significant gains from pretest to posttest were seen on reading and math tests on both measures, with standardized gains ranging from one quarter to one half a standard deviation. The gains on the CASAS are comparable to those seen in the earlier Even Start evaluation and in other adult education programs. On the TABE, 50 percent of students in the study increased at least two grade levels on reading and math; 25 percent of students gained three grade levels or more between pretest and posttest.

- Approximately 8 percent of adults in the Universe Study and 24 percent of adults in the Sample Study attained a GED certificate while participating in Even Start. The percentage of adults in the Sample Study who received a GED is nearly double that of the In-Depth Study in the earlier Even Start evaluation.

Do program outcomes vary depending on project and participant characteristics?

- Hours of instruction received by adults and children participating in Even Start was significantly related to scores on several outcome measures. The total hours of early childhood education received by children had a statistically significant relationship to gains on both the PSI and the PLS-3. Total hours of instruction in adult education was related to gains on the CASAS and TABE math tests, but not the reading tests. Hours of parenting education was significantly related to gains on the HOME Screening Questionnaire.

- In families with a higher index of need, children and parents tend to have smaller gains on the PSI, PLS-3, and HSQ and larger gains on the TABE reading test than children of families with fewer needs. The difference in scores among families with a need index of zero versus a need index of 7 corresponds to about one-half a standard deviation in scores on the four measures. No relationship was seen for the other outcome measures.

- There were few significant relationships between project characteristics and program outcomes. Children in projects that emphasized center-based programs had larger learning gains than children in projects that emphasized home-based services. Families in projects that allocate large amounts of time for parents and children to spend together on learning activities have better home learning environments than families in projects that allocate less time on activities for parents and children together.

- Higher scores on the PSI at the posttest were associated with fewer home-based hours per month and smaller percentages of home-based early childhood education. Higher scores on the PLS-3 also were related to a lower percentage of time in home-based early childhood education. These findings suggest that children enrolled in projects that emphasize home-based instruction produced lower gains in preschool readiness and language skills than children in projects that emphasize center-based programs.

- For parents, more hours in parent-child activities was positively related to scores on the HSQ for children ages 3 to 6. No such relationship was seen for the number of hours of parent education provided to parents alone. This finding suggests that activities in which parents and children are together have more transference to the home environment and to improved parent-child relationships overall than parenting information presented to parents alone.

How is the Even Start program implemented at the project level? What are their funding and staffing patterns?

- In 1994-95, most (90 percent) of Even Start projects were operating with four-year grants. The average federal Even Start funds for 1994-95 was $173,586 per project; the average local contribution was $87,161, and the average total resources amounted to $263,975 per project. The average total resources increased by $25,601 from the comparable average for 1993-94.

- The average federal funds spent per family across all projects was $2,735, a figure that has remained essentially unchanged over the last two years. However, combining the federal and local shares, the average per-family spending increased to $4,069, an increase of $360 since 1993-94.

- While staffing patterns range widely across projects, on average, Even Start projects support one administrator, four instructors, two teacher aides, one family specialist, one support service provider, one evaluator, and another staff person. An average of about seven volunteers augment the personnel resources paid by Even Start funds.

- Among the instructors paid by Even Start, about half have a bachelor's degree as the highest degree completed, and another 23 percent have a master's degree. A high school diploma or GED certificate is the highest degree completed by 69 percent of teacher aides. Twenty-seven percent of aides have some postsecondary schooling, 14 percent with associate's degrees and 12 percent with bachelor's degrees.

What inservice training is provided to Even Start staff?

- Even Start administrators, on average, receive the most inservice training, about nine days per year. Instructors and family specialists receive 7 to 8 inservice training days annually, and teacher aides receive 5 to 6 days per year.

- The most commonly addressed training topics in the area of program coordination are planning and program improvement, team building, recruitment, retention strategies, and conducting home visits.

- The topics related to educational services frequently taught in inservice training are parent-child activities, child development (in the contexts of parenting education and early childhood education), the role of parents as teachers, and child assessment.

How are the service delivery activities shared by collaborating agencies?

- Adult education programs are taught only by Even Start instructors in about one-third of projects and only by collaborating agency staff in another third of projects. About one-quarter of projects use staff from both Even Start and collaborating agencies to implement adult education services. Most commonly, the collaborating agencies that provide adult education instructors are departments in the public school system, community colleges, colleges, universities, and volunteer groups.

- Even Start staff are solely responsible for parenting education in a majority (58 percent) of projects, while this responsibility is shared with collaborating agencies in 27 percent of projects. Typically, the agencies that contribute staff for parenting education are departments in the public school system, other community groups, and government agencies.

- Strict reliance on the Even Start staff to provide early childhood education decreases with the age of children, as collaborating agencies assume increasing responsibilities in this area. A majority (61 percent) of projects use Even Start staff only to deliver early childhood education for children under age 3. However, the percentages decline to 44, 28, and 19 percent for 3-4-year-olds, 5-year-olds, and 6 or older children, respectively. The key collaborating agencies in this area are departments in the public school system, Head Start programs, and other preschool and daycare programs.

What are the special barriers to implementation? What types of technical assistance do the projects need?

- Five program implementation issues present problems and challenges to most projects. These barriers are improving participants' attendance, improving retention and motivation, obtaining sufficient financial resources, meeting participants' social service needs, and transportation.

- In the area of program operations, projects need assistance to increase participant involvement and retention, manage funding and fiscal issues, and deliver staff development.

- In the areas of educational and support services, technical assistance is particularly needed for improving retention, using computers, and solving transportation problems.

Finally, what are the projects' plans after the current Even Start grant expires?

- Ninety percent of projects plan to continue their program after their current grant expires. Most projects plan to seek funding from multiple sources: 80 percent plan to apply for a new Even Start grant; 54 percent plan to obtain funding from foundations or corporate sources; and 46 percent plan to carry on with local funds.

Conclusions

In concluding this report, we must remind the readers at what stage we are in this evaluation so that the information compiled to date is used most appropriately. The basic questions guiding the national evaluation have remained essentially unchanged since six years ago, and this report provides general comparisons of 1994-95 findings with the previous findings in an attempt to identify trends over time. However, specific aspects of the data collection forms used in the first and the current evaluations differ. We have two years of data on project characteristics based on the current instrument, the ESIS, and 1994-95 was the first year in which the family-level data were collected using the ESIS. Comparisons with the first evaluation results are approximate because they are based on data collected using similar but not always comparable questions and reporting formats. With this caveat, we offer the following concluding observations.

The Even Start program is still growing--each year, there are more Even Start projects serving more families in more communities across the United States. At the same time, six years after the initial implementation, many aspects of program operation seem to have settled into a predictable, stable pattern. Consistency, rather than change, is the general pattern that emerges when comparing project characteristics across the last two years. This conclusion applies to the types of educational and support services offered, staffing patterns, staff qualifications, types and intensity of inservice training, nature of interagency collaboration, and the issues that present special difficulties in implementing Even Start services.

We note, however, two project-level findings that may be encouraging signs of gradual change in the direction of improvement. One area of change relates to program funding and the ability of local projects to summon an increasing share of local resources (both as cash and in-kind contributions). The availability of local resources depends, to a large extent, on many factors that are outside the projects' control, including the economic well being of the surrounding community. Securing a sufficient financial base to support the intended services continues to be a major challenge for projects. However, this year's data suggest that projects are operating with greater total resources. While the per-family federal share remains stable, the total available resources per family may be increasing due to an expanding local share.

Another sign of improvement relates to the intensity of educational services offered. Across all components, there was a slight increase in scheduled contact hours. Although preliminary, this trend, if it continues, may prove to be a significant factor in increasing program effectiveness. This year's data also suggest that intensity of the services offered may be the most critical project-related factor that contributes to greater participation and educational achievement outcomes.

The central focus of this Interim Report was on describing the profiles of participating families as 1994-95 was the first time in two years that program-wide data on participating families were collected. We found that many basic characteristics of Even Start families remained stable from 1993, the final year of the first evaluation. Most of the participating parents are young adults, who have completed some high school education before enrolling in Even Start, and a majority of participating children fall in the preschool-kindergarten age range. Most of the participating parents are unemployed at intake and have below poverty-level incomes.

This year's data did indicate one dramatic change in the demographic characteristics of Even Start families, namely, a significant upsurge of Hispanic families compared to two years ago. Even though many of the Hispanic families are concentrated in several states in the southern and western regions, this demographic change is likely to generate new or greater challenges in certain aspects of service delivery. Greater emphasis on providing quality ESL programs is one obvious challenge. An additional challenge for projects may be to strengthen the beginning adult basic education component, since most of the parents entering Even Start with the lowest levels of education are Hispanic and Asian.

This year's data also suggest the beginning of an increase in teenage parents enrolling in Even Start. Although the legislative change allowing additional teens to enroll as parents did not take effect until July 1995, the slight increase for 1994-95 may signal a substantial rise in this age group in subsequent years.

In constructing a profile of families with multiple indices of extreme need, we found that more than half of Even Start families fall into the extremely needy range. (Those who are not classified as extremely needy are also very disadvantaged relative to the general population.) In 25 percent of projects, the percent of extremely needy families is 70 percent or more.

Recruiting families in need of Even Start services does not seem to be a problem. While maintaining participants' motivation seems to be a significant challenge, approximately 70 percent of participating families were retained or had completed their goals at year end. Although comparing the rates of retention/completion with previous years is problematic (due to differences in available data), the overall retention rates may be improving as more projects accumulate years of experience and newer projects can take advantage of the "lessons learned" by mature projects.

Finally, there are some preliminary indications that Even Start services are helping to improve parents' academic skills and children's language development. The data from the Sample Study on test scores for adults and children consistently show positive gains on all measures. In addition, the majority of these gains are modest to large, with standardized gains on the order of .3 or above, with many above .5 (corresponding to one-half a standard deviation).

Although we do not have a control group for any of these measures, comparisons to national norms, to other studies, and to the previous Even Start evaluation reveal that these gains are also of educational significance. For example, gains on the HOME Screening Questionnaire are larger than those seen among another group of low-income parents. Gains on the PreSchool Inventory are as large as those seen in the earlier Even Start evaluation and in other high-quality preschool programs. On the Preschool Language Scale, it appears that over the course of the Even Start year, children began to close the gap between their chronological age and their age-equivalent score on the standardized test. On the CASAS reading, gains are comparable to the earlier Even Start evaluation; on the TABE reading and math, adults tend to gain about two grade levels over a seven-month period.

Taken together, these results suggest positive effects for Even Start. Data from the next testing period, which will reflect an additional year in the program, will provide useful information about the stability and longevity of these results.

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Appendix A

Even Start Legislation

Reauthorization of Even Start Family Literacy Programs

Improving America's Schools Act, 1994

P.L. 103-761, Title I, Part B

"PART B—EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS

"SEC. 1201. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.

"It is the purpose of this part to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the Nation's low-income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program, to be referred to as 'Even Start'. The program shall—

"(1) be implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services;

"(2) promote achievement of the National Education Goals; and

"(3) assist children and adults from low-income families to achieve to challenging State content standards and challenging State student performance standards.

"SEC. 1202. PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.

"(a) Reservation for Migrant Programs, Outlying Areas, and Indian Tribes.—

"(1) In general.—For each fiscal year, the Secretary shall reserve 5 percent of the amount appropriated under section 1002(b) for programs, under such terms and conditions as the Secretary shall establish, that are consistent with the purpose of this part, and according to their relative needs, for—

"(A) children of migratory workers;

"(B) the outlying areas; and

"(C) Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

"(2) Special rule.—If the amount of funds made available under this subsection exceeds $4,600,000, the Secretary shall award a grant, on a competitive basis, of sufficient size and for a period of sufficient duration to demonstrate the effectiveness of a family literacy program in a prison that houses women and their preschool age children and that has the capability of developing a program of high quality.

"(b) Reservation for Federal Activities.—From amounts appropriated under section 1002(b), the Secretary may reserve not more than three percent of such amounts or the amount reserved to carry out the activities described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a) for the fiscal year 1994, whichever is greater, for purposes of—

"(1) carrying out the evaluation required by section 1209; and

"(2) providing, through grants or contracts with eligible organizations, technical assistance, program improvement, and replication activities.

"(c) Reservation for Grants.—

"(1) Grants authorized.—In any fiscal year in which the amount appropriated to carry out this part exceeds the amount appropriated to carry out this part for the preceding fiscal year, the Secretary may reserve such funds in excess of the amount appropriated for such preceding fiscal years as do not exceed

$1,000,000 to award grants, on a competitive basis, to States to enable such States to plan and implement, statewide family literacy initiatives to coordinate and integrate existing Federal, State, and local literacy resources consistent with the purposes of this part. Such coordination and integration shall include funds available under the Adult Education Act, Head Start, Even Start, and the Family Support Act of 1988.

"(2) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary shall not make a grant to a State under paragraph (1) unless the State agrees that, with respect to the costs to be incurred by the eligible consortium in carrying out the activities for which the grant was awarded, the State will make available non-Federal contributions in an amount equal to not less than the Federal funds provided under the grant.

"(d) STATE ALLOCATION.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts appropriated under section 1002(b) and not reserved under subsections (a), (b), and (c), the Secretary shall make grants to States from allocations under paragraph (2).

"(2) ALLOCATIONS.—Except as provided in paragraph (3), from the total amount available for allocation to States in any fiscal year, each State shall be eligible to receive a grant under paragraph (1) in an amount that bears the same ratio to such total amount as the amount allocated under part A to that State bears to the total amount allocated under that section to all the States.

"(3) MINIMUM.—No State shall receive a grant under paragraph (1) in any fiscal year in an amount which is less than $250,000, or one-half of 1 percent of the amount appropriated under section 1002(b) and not reserved under subsections (a), (b), and (c) for such year, whichever is greater.

"(e) DEFINITIONS.—For the purpose of this part—

"(1) the term 'eligible entity' means a partnership composed of both—

"(A) a local educational agency; and

"(B) a nonprofit community-based organization, a public agency other than a local educational agency, an institution of higher education, or a public or private nonprofit organization other than a local educational agency, of demonstrated quality;

"(2) the term 'eligible organization' means any public or private nonprofit organization with a record of providing effective services to family literacy providers, such as the National Center for Family Literacy, Parents as Teachers, Inc., the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and the Home and School Institute, Inc.;

"(3) the terms 'Indian tribe' and 'tribal organization' have the meanings given such terms in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act; and

"(4) the term 'State' includes each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

"SEC. 1203. STATE PROGRAMS.

"(a) STATE LEVEL ACTIVITIES.—Each State that receives a grant under section 1202(d)(1) may use not more than 5 percent of the grant funds for the costs of—

"(1) administration; and

"(2) providing, through one or more subgrants or contracts, technical assistance for program improvement and replication, to eligible entities that receive subgrants under subsection (b).

"(b) SUBGRANTS FOR LOCAL PROGRAMS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State shall use the grant funds received under section 1202(d)(1) and not reserved under subsection (a) to award subgrants to eligible entities to carry out Even Start programs.

"(2) MINIMUM.—No State shall award a subgrant under paragraph (1) in an amount less than $75,000, except that a State may award one subgrant in each fiscal year of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective in an amount less than $75,000 if, after awarding subgrants under paragraph (1) for such fiscal year in amounts of $75,000 or greater, less than $75,000 is available to the State to award such subgrants.

"SEC. 1204. USES OF FUNDS.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out an Even Start program under this part, a recipient of funds under this part shall use such funds to pay the Federal share of the cost of providing family-centered education programs that involve parents and children, from birth through age seven, in a cooperative effort to help parents become full partners in the education of their children and to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners.

"(b) FEDERAL SHARE LIMITATION.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—(A) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Federal share under this part may not exceed—

"(i) 90 percent of the total cost of the program in the first year that such program receives assistance under this part or its predecessor authority;

"(ii) 80 percent in the second such year;

"(iii) 70 percent in the third such year;

"(iv) 60 percent in the fourth such year; and

"(v) 50 percent in any subsequent such year.

"(B) The remaining cost of a program assisted under this part may be provided in cash or in kind, fairly evaluated and may be obtained from any source, including other Federal funds under this Act.

"(2) WAIVER.—The State educational agency may waive, in whole or in part, the cost-sharing requirement described in paragraph (1) for an eligible entity if such entity—

"(A) demonstrates that such entity otherwise would not be able to participate in the program assisted under this part; and

"(B) negotiates an agreement with the State educational agency with respect to the amount of the remaining cost to which the waiver will be applicable.

"(3) PROHIBITION.—Federal funds provided under this part may not be used for the indirect costs of a program assisted *under this part, except that the Secretary may waive this paragraph if an eligible recipient of funds reserved under section 1202(a)(1)(C) demonstrates to the Secretary's satisfaction that such recipient otherwise would not be able to participate in the program assisted under this part.*

"SEC. 1205. PROGRAM ELEMENTS.

"Each program assisted under this part shall—

"(1) include the identification and recruitment of families most in need of services provided under this part, as indicated by a low level of income, a low level of adult literacy or English language proficiency of the eligible parent or parents, and other need-related indicators;

"(2) include screening and preparation of parents, including teenage parents and children to enable such parents to participate fully in the activities and services provided under this part, including testing, referral to necessary counselling, other developmental and support services, and related services;

"(3) be designed to accommodate the participants' work schedule and other responsibilities, including the provision of support services, when such services are unavailable from other sources, necessary for participation in the activities assisted under this part, such as—

"(A) scheduling and locating of services to allow joint participation by parents and children;

"(B) child care for the period that parents are involved in the program provided under this part; and

"(C) transportation for the purpose of enabling parents and their children to participate in programs authorized by this part;

"(4) include high-quality instructional programs that promote adult literacy and empower parents to support the educational growth of their children, developmentally appropriate early childhood educational services, and preparation of children for success in regular school programs;

"(5) include special training of staff, including child care staff, to develop the skills necessary to work with parents and young children in the full range of instructional services offered through this part;

"(6) provide and monitor integrated instructional services to participating parents and children through home-based programs;

"(7) operate on a year-round basis, including the provision of some program services, instructional or enrichment, during the summer months;

"(8) be coordinated with—

"(A) programs assisted under other parts of this title and this Act;

"(B) any relevant programs under the Adult Education Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Job Training Partnership Act; and

"(C) the Head Start program, volunteer literacy programs, and other relevant programs;

"(9) ensure that the programs will serve those families most in need of the activities and services provided by this part; and

"(10) provide for an independent evaluation of the program.

"SEC. 1206. ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b), eligible participants in an Even Start program are—

"(1) a parent or parents—

"(A) who are eligible for participation in an adult basic education program under the Adult Education Act; or

"(B) who are within the State's compulsory school attendance age range, so long as a local educational agency provides (or ensures the availability of) the basic education component required under this part; and

"(2) the child or children, from birth through age seven, of any individual described in paragraph (1).

"(b) ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN OTHER PARTICIPANTS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Family members of eligible participants described in subsection (a) may participate in activities and services provided under this part, when appropriate to serve the purpose of this part.

"(2) SPECIAL RULE.—Any family participating in a program assisted under this part that becomes ineligible for such participation as a result of one or more members of the family becoming ineligible for such participation may continue to participate in the program until all members of the family become ineligible for such participation, which—

"(A) in the case of a family in which ineligibility was due to the child or children of such family attaining the age of eight, shall be in two years or when the parent or parents become ineligible due to educational advancement, whichever occurs first; and

"(B) in the case of a family in which ineligibility was due to the educational advancement of the parent or parents of such family, shall be when all children in the family attain the age of eight.

"SEC. 1207. APPLICATIONS.

"(a) SUBMISSION.—To be eligible to receive a subgrant under this part, an eligible entity shall submit an application to the State educational agency in such form and containing or accompanied by such information as the State educational agency shall require.

"(b) REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION.—Each application shall include documentation, satisfactory to the State educational agency, that the eligible entity has the qualified personnel needed—

"(1) to develop, administer, and implement an Even Start program under this part; and

"(2) to provide access to the special training necessary to prepare staff for the program, which may be offered by an eligible organization.

"(c) PLAN.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Such application shall also include a plan of operation for the program which shall include—

"(A) a description of the program goals;

"(B) a description of the activities and services that will be provided under the program, including a description of *how the program will incorporate the program elements required by section 1205;*

"(C) a description of the population to be served and an estimate of the number of participants to be served;

"(D) as appropriate, a description of the applicant's collaborative efforts with institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, the State educational agency, private elementary schools, or other eligible organizations in carrying out the program for which assistance is sought;

"(E) a statement of the methods that will be used—

"(i) to ensure that the programs will serve families most in need of the activities and services provided by this part;

"(ii) to provide services under this part to individuals with special needs, such as individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities; and

"(iii) to encourage participants to remain in the program for a time sufficient to meet the program's purpose; and

"(F) a description of how the plan is integrated with other programs under this Act, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, or other Acts, as appropriate, consistent with section 14306.

"(2) DURATION OF THE PLAN.—Each plan submitted under paragraph (1)(A) shall—

"(A) remain in effect for the duration of the eligible entity's participation under this part; and

"(B) be periodically reviewed and revised by the eligible entity as necessary.

"(d) CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION.—The plan described in subsection (c)(1)(F) may be submitted as part of a consolidated application under section 14302.

"SEC. 1208. AWARD OF SUBGRANTS.

"(a) SELECTION PROCESS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The State educational agency shall establish a review panel in accordance with paragraph (3) that will approve applications that—

"(A) are most likely to be successful in—

"(i) meeting the purpose of this part; and

"(ii) effectively implementing the program elements required under section 1205;

"(B) demonstrate that the area to be served by such program has a high percentage or a large number of children and families who are in need of such services as indicated by high levels of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, limited-English proficiency, or other need-related indicators, including a high percentage of children to be served by the program who reside in a school attendance area eligible for participation in programs under part A;

"(C) provide services for at least a three-year age range, which may begin at birth;

"(D) demonstrate the greatest possible cooperation and coordination between a variety of relevant service providers in all phases of the program;

"(E) include cost-effective budgets, given the scope of the application;

"(F) demonstrate the applicant's ability to provide the Federal share required by section 1204(b);

"(G) are representative of urban and rural regions of the State; and

"(H) show the greatest promise for providing models that may be adopted by other local educational agencies.

"(2) PRIORITY FOR SUBGRANTS.—The State educational agency shall give priority for subgrants under this subsection to applications that—

"(A) target services primarily to families described in paragraph (1)(B); or

"(B) are located in areas designated as empowerment zones or enterprise communities.

"(3) REVIEW PANEL.—A review panel shall consist of at least three members, including one early childhood professional, one adult education professional, and one or more of the following individuals:

"(A) A representative of a parent-child education organization.

"(B) A representative of a community-based literacy organization.

"(C) A member of a local board of education.

"(D) A representative of business and industry with a commitment to education.

"(E) An individual who has been involved in the implementation of programs under this title in the State.

"(b) DURATION.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Subgrants under this part may be awarded for a period not to exceed four years.

"(2) STARTUP PERIOD.—The State educational agency may provide subgrant funds to an eligible recipient, at such recipient's request, for a three- to six-month startup period during the first year of the four-year grant period, which may include staff recruitment and training, and the coordination of services, before requiring full implementation of the program.

"(3) CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY.—In awarding subgrant funds to continue a program under this part for the second, third, or fourth year, the State educational agency shall review the progress being made toward meeting the objectives of the program after the conclusion of the startup period, if any.

"(4) INSUFFICIENT PROGRESS.—The State educational agency may refuse to award subgrant funds if such agency finds that sufficient progress has not been made toward meeting such objectives, but only after affording the applicant notice and an opportunity for a hearing.

"(5) GRANT RENEWAL.—(A) An eligible entity that has previously received a subgrant under this part may reapply under

this part for additional subgrants. An eligible recipient may receive funds under this part for a period not to exceed eight years.

"(B) The Federal share of any subgrant renewed under subparagraph (A) shall not exceed 50 percent in any fiscal year.

"SEC. 1209. EVALUATION.

"From funds reserved under section 1202(b)(1), the Secretary shall provide for an independent evaluation of programs assisted under this part—

"(1) to determine the performance and effectiveness of programs assisted under this part; and

"(2) to identify effective Even Start programs assisted under this part that can be duplicated and used in providing technical assistance to Federal, State, and local programs.

"SEC. 1210. CONSTRUCTION.

"Nothing in this part shall be construed to prohibit a recipient of funds under this part from serving students participating in Even Start simultaneously with students with similar educational needs, in the same educational settings where appropriate.

"PART C—EDUCATION OF MIGRATORY CHILDREN

"SEC. 1301. PROGRAM PURPOSE.

"It is the purpose of this part to assist States to—

"(1) support high-quality and comprehensive educational programs for migratory children to help reduce the educational disruptions and other problems that result from repeated moves;

"(2) ensure that migratory children are provided with appropriate educational services (including supportive services) that address their special needs in a coordinated and efficient manner;

"(3) ensure that migratory children have the opportunity to meet the same challenging State content standards and challenging State student performance standards that all children are expected to meet;

"(4) design programs to help migratory children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit the ability of such children to do well in school, and to prepare such children to make a successful transition to postsecondary education or employment; and

"(5) ensure that migratory children benefit from State and local systemic reforms.

"SEC. 1302. PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.

"In order to carry out the purpose of this part, the Secretary shall make grants to State educational agencies, or combinations of such agencies, to establish or improve, directly or through local operating agencies, programs of education for migratory children in accordance with this part.

Appendix B

Additional Data Tables

Exhibit B.1.

Number of Projects that Submitted 1994-95 Even Start National Evaluation Data, by State and Type of Project

State	Migrant	Tribal	State-Admin.	Total
Alabama	0	0	11	11
Alaska	0	0	2	2
Arizona	1	0	7	8
Arkansas	1	0	11	12
California	1	1	42	44
Colorado	1	1	7	9
Connecticut	0	0	3	3
Delaware	0	0	1	1
District of Columbia	0	0	1	1
Florida	1	0	14	15
Georgia	0	0	9	9
Hawaii	0	0	1	1
Idaho	1	0	4	5
Illinois	0	0	18	18
Indiana	0	0	6	6
Iowa	0	0	5	5
Kansas	0	1	5	6
Kentucky	1	0	9	10
Louisiana	1	0	11	12
Maine	0	0	5	5
Maryland	0	0	8	8
Massachusetts	0	0	7	7
Michigan	1	0	17	18
Minnesota	0	0	5	5
Mississippi	0	0	11	11
Missouri	0	0	8	8
Montana	0	0	3	3
Nebraska	0	0	3	3
Nevada	0	0	4	4
New Jersey	0	0	9	9
New Mexico	1	0	4	5
New York	0	0	31	31
North Carolina	0	0	9	9
North Dakota	0	1	3	4
Ohio	0	0	16	16
Oklahoma	0	1	6	7

Exhibit B.1. (Continued)

Number of Projects that Submitted 1994-95 Even Start National Evaluation Data, by State and Type of Project

State	Migrant	Tribal	State-Admin.	Total
Oregon	0	0	6	6
Pennsylvania	1	0	18	19
Puerto Rico	0	0	12	12
Rhode Island	0	0	2	2
South Carolina	0	0	10	10
South Dakota	0	0	1	1
Tennessee	0	0	17	17
Texas	0	0	35	35
Utah	0	0	4	4
Vermont	0	0	2	2
Virginia	0	0	7	7
Washington	0	2	9	11
West Virginia	0	0	6	6
Wisconsin	0	0	11	11
Wyoming	0	0	2	2
Total	**11**	**7**	**458**	**476**

Note: A total of 513 projects operated the Even Start Program in 1994-95. Of these, 476 (93 percent) submitted data for the National Even Start Evaluation.

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Exhibit B.2.

Number[a] and Percent of Even Start Families, by Region, State, and Ethnicity

NORTHEAST REGION

	Asian / Pacific Islander	Native American	Hispanic	African American	White	Total Number per State[a]
Connecticut	7%	0%	49%	22%	22%	130
Massachusetts	5	0	15	26	53	204
Maine	7	2	0	4	87	54
New Jersey	0	1	16	64	19	201
New York	6	2	23	23	46	2238
Pennsylvania	1	<1	28	27	43	1409
Rhode Island	8	0	60	23	9	65
Vermont	0	0	2	0	98	42
Percentages of Ethnic Groups in Region	**4%**	**1%**	**25%**	**26%**	**44%**	**4343**

MIDWEST REGION

	Asian / Pacific Islander	Native American	Hispanic	African American	White	Total Number per State[a]
Iowa	10%	1%	54%	4%	32%	171
Illinois	11	<1	40	24	25	926
Indiana	1	<1	9	31	59	205
Kansas	3	6	23	14	55	594
Michigan	1	1	7	12	79	699
Minnesota	35	4	4	11	45	178
Missouri	7	<1	2	56	34	459
North Dakota	0	59	2	3	36	59
Nebraska	16	3	32	4	45	100
Ohio	3	<1	2	31	63	823
South Dakota	5	25	4	11	55	55
Wisconsin	23	9	8	2	58	434
Percentages of Ethnic Groups in Region	**8%**	**3%**	**16%**	**22%**	**51%**	**4703**

Exhibit B.2. (Continued)

Number[a] and Percent of Even Start Families, by Region, State, and Ethnicity

SOUTH REGION

	Asian / Pacific Islander	Native American	Hispanic	African American	White	Total Number per State[a]
Alabama	0%	<1%	3%	57%	40%	257
Arkansas	<1	<1	13	35	51	935
District of Columbia	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	0	0	13	40	47	45
Florida	2	<1	24	43	31	1683
Georgia	2	1	11	54	32	700
Kentucky	1	<1	2	12	84	703
Louisiana	15	1	12	45	27	1055
Maryland	<1	1	24	39	35	226
Mississippi	3	0	1	70	25	850
North Carolina	3	<1	13	43	41	266
Oklahoma	2	21	27	9	41	286
Puerto Rico	0	0	100	0	0	584
South Carolina	0	0	0	84	16	341
Tennessee	1	0	2	23	74	565
Texas	1	<1	80	8	11	3159
Virginia	<1	0	2	52	46	300
West Virginia	0	0	3	11	86	209
Percentages of Ethnic Groups in Region	**2%**	**1%**	**33%**	**31%**	**32%**	**12164**

Exhibit B.2. (Continued)

Number[a] and Percent of Even Start Families, by Region, State, and Ethnicity

WEST REGION

	Asian / Pacific Islander	Native American	Hispanic	African American	White	Total Number per State[a]
Alaska	17%	15%	31%	10%	27%	59
Arizona	1	1	92	1	5	359
California	8	3	76	5	8	3342
Colorado	1	4	55	5	35	445
Hawaii	94	0	3	0	3	31
Idaho	2	0	66	1	31	193
Montana	4	35	10	1	50	80
New Mexico	0	11	81	0	8	221
Nevada	5	4	55	1	35	85
Oregon	2	2	46	2	47	257
Utah	6	14	46	3	31	472
Washington	14	15	39	9	23	395
Wyoming	0	11	15	0	74	46
Percentages of Ethnic Groups in Region	**7%**	**5%**	**67%**	**5%**	**16%**	**5985**

[a] The numbers represent the families for whom ethnicity data were submitted.

Note: Percentages in each state row refer to the distribution of ethnic groups within the state; the **bolded** percentages refer to the entire region.

Exhibit B.3.

Number of Even Start Projects, by Region, State and Type of Community

NORTHEAST REGION

	Urban	Rural	Mixed	Total
Connecticut	0	1	2	3
Maine	4	0	1	5
Massachusetts	4	1	2	7
New Jersey	4	1	4	9
New York	14	4	13	31
Pennsylvania	8	5	6	19
Rhode Island	1	0	1	2
Vermont	2	0	0	2
Total	**37**	**12**	**29**	**78**

MIDWEST REGION

	Urban	Rural	Mixed	Total
Illinois	4	2	12	18
Indiana	3	1	2	6
Iowa	2	0	3	5
Kansas	2	2	2	6
Michigan	12	1	5	18
Minnesota	1	1	3	5
Missouri	3	1	4	8
Nebraska	1	0	1	2
North Dakota	3	0	1	4
Ohio	6	2	8	16
South Dakota	0	1	0	1
Wisconsin	8	1	2	11
Total	**45**	**12**	**43**	**100**

Exhibit B.3. (Continued)

Number of Even Start Projects, by Region, State and Type of Community

SOUTH REGION	Urban	Rural	Mixed	Total
Alabama	7	1	3	11
Arkansas	7	3	2	12
Delaware	1	0	0	1
District of Columbia	0	0	1	1
Florida	3	8	4	15
Georgia	4	3	2	9
Kentucky	7	2	1	10
Louisiana	6	3	3	12
Maryland	4	2	2	8
Mississippi	8	1	2	11
North Carolina	6	1	2	9
Oklahoma	5	0	2	7
Puerto Rico	9	2	1	12
South Carolina	9	0	1	10
Tennessee	11	2	4	17
Texas	18	5	11	34
Virginia	5	0	2	7
West Virginia	2	1	3	6
Total	**112**	**34**	**46**	**192**

Exhibit B.3. (Continued)

Number of Even Start Projects, by Region, State and Type of Community

WEST REGION

	Urban	Rural	Mixed	Total
Alaska	1	1	0	2
Arizona	1	3	4	8
California	19	6	18	43
Colorado	3	0	5	8
Hawaii	0	1	0	1
Idaho	2	1	2	5
Montana	2	1	0	3
Nevada	3	0	1	4
New Mexico	2	0	3	5
Oregon	4	2	0	6
Utah	1	1	2	4
Washington	7	2	2	11
Wyoming	2	0	0	2
Total	**47**	**18**	**37**	**102**

Note: The table is based on 472 projects--the 476 projects that submitted data minus four projects in the Southern Region that did not indicate "type of community."

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